

# BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

Agent of Transition

Proceedings of the Blue Ridge Parkway  
Golden Anniversary Conference

*Edited by Barry M. Buxton*



*Steven M. Beatty*

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Appalachian Consortium Press/Boone, North Carolina

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Barry M. Buxton  
and  
Steven M. Beatty

Editorial Assistant: Dana Bartlett



The Appalachian Consortium was a non-profit educational organization composed of institutions and agencies located in Southern Appalachia. From 1973 to 2004, its members published pioneering works in Appalachian studies documenting the history and cultural heritage of the region. The Appalachian Consortium Press was the first publisher devoted solely to the region and many of the works it published remain seminal in the field to this day.

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## **DEDICATION**

We dedicate these Proceedings and the Blue Ridge Parkway Golden Anniversary Conference to the ingenuity and labor of all the men and women who have played a part in designing, constructing, and maintaining the Blue Ridge Parkway.

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The Blue Ridge Parkway holds a special place among the 337 units that make up our National Park System. It represents all of the values — natural, cultural and recreational — upon which that great system was founded.

To all those who played a part in the building of the Parkway, to all those dedicated employees of the National Park Service who watch over it, to all of our friends in the commonwealth of Virginia and the state of North Carolina who have been our valued partners in this effort: We salute you, we honor you, we thank you for your contribution and support.

*Donald Paul Hodel*  
Director  
Department of Interior

# Blue Ridge Parkway

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# INTRODUCTION

The Blue Ridge Parkway Golden Anniversary Conference was a joyous occasion. It brought together people from all across the nation and from abroad to celebrate America's favorite road. It was especially gratifying to have so many participants in the early planning and design of the Parkway attend the Conference and participate in the varied activities. Yet the conference was more than a celebration. It was a serious attempt to examine the impact the Parkway has had on a region and its people.

Perhaps no other road in the world interprets the natural and cultural history of a region so well as the Blue Ridge Parkway does the Southern Appalachians. The Parkway's 469 miles provide unparalleled vista's of the valleys and peaks of the Blue Ridge as well as a unique glimpse of the culture and traditions of the Southern mountaineer. Exhibit centers help preserve and interpret both the natural and cultural treasures of the region and extensive trails, lakes and mountain streams meet the recreational needs of over 19 million visitors.

Like the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Consortium is engaged in preserving the cultural heritage and protecting the natural resources of Southern Appalachia. Since its inception in 1971, the Appalachian Consortium has endeavored to stimulate regional cooperation. Our thirteen member institutions and agencies and over 100 volunteers serve 156 mountain counties in seven states. All work together to preserve the unique culture of Southern Appalachia and to improve the quality of life for its citizens. The Blue Ridge Parkway, a long-time member of the Consortium, has contributed significantly to both of these goals. Sponsoring the Golden Anniversary to celebrate the Parkway's contributions to the region was therefore an exciting and altogether fitting opportunity for the Consortium.

The Conference also provided a perfect forum to put the ideal of regional cooperation to work. From the beginning, the Conference Steering Committee recognized that if the Conference was to be successful, it required the support and involvement of professional landscape architects. After all, it was ultimately their vision and leadership which transformed an often decimated landscape into the Parkway millions of Americans know today. They are the master craftsmen of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the "Crown Jewel of the Appalachians." Likewise, support and involvement of civil engineers was needed because their contribution made highway construction possible and provided employment for thousands of mountain people. In many cases it was this employment which helped families survive the Great Depression.

Fortunately, both the American Society of Landscape Architects and the North Carolina Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers

rendered considerable assistance in planning and executing the Conference. Additional support was provided by the National Park Service, the state of North Carolina, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Conference was, in every sense of the word, a model of regional cooperation.

In order to stimulate public participation in the Conference, a student art and essay contest was held. Planned and designed with the guidance of a committee of teachers and administrators from schools throughout the region, the response of students was overwhelming. Over 300 art entries were received in four categories ranging from first graders to high school seniors. The essay competition was limited to high school students and the submissions were varied and exciting. Many of the entries were displayed at the Conference and exhibited at several locations on the Parkway. The winning students received cash awards and the schools they attend each received, in the students' honor, a selection of books valued at over \$500 from the Eastern Parks and National Monument Association and the Appalachian Consortium Press. I believe I speak for all of the Conference Committee in saying that one of the Conference highlights was the pride and joy in the faces of the parents whose children were winners in the art and essay contest.

In conjunction with the Conference and the other celebration activities, the Appalachian Consortium Press published a commemorative book entitled *Blue Ridge Parkway: The First 50 Years*. Written by Dr. Harley E. Jolley and illustrated with color photographs by Dr. William A. Bake, this book tells the exciting history of the Parkway from the early political deliberations about appropriate routes to the modern day controversy surrounding the "missing link" and the construction of the famed Linn Cove Viaduct.

It was the hope of the Conference Steering Committee that the Blue Ridge Parkway Golden Anniversary Conference would be truly interdisciplinary and attract broad participation. I think you will agree after perusing the content that the Committee succeeded in this objective.

The Conference benefited enormously from the attendance and participation of William Mott, new Director of the National Park Service and Stewart Udall, former Secretary of the Department of Interior. Mr. Mott outlined his immediate and long-term objectives for the National Park Service and shared some important observations about current problems and needs. Mr. Udall encouraged Conference participants to remember the spirit which helped make the Parkway possible and to work in that spirit for the conservation of our threatened natural resources.

It's generally acknowledged that the opening session of conferences is extremely important in setting a tone and giving meaning to that which follows. Our opening presentation by noted historian Harley E. Jolley was extremely popular and focused on "The First 50 Years." It included a comprehensive slide presentation of Parkway construction and paid special tribute to the contributions of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Wilma Dykeman, noted author and lecturer, informed and entertained the banquet audience

later that evening with a presentation on the diverse history of the Blue Ridge Mountain area and her childhood remembrances of it.

Clearly one of the highlights of the Conference was the presence of Jean Muller, Chief Engineer of the Linn Cove Viaduct. He flew from Paris to share his expertise on “precast, post-tensioned, segmental, cantilevered bridge construction” designed to preserve the natural landscape of Grandfather Mountain. Conference participants toured the famed viaduct with Mr. Muller and his associate Gene Figg in the engineering design firm of Figg and Muller.

While much of the focus of the Conference was on the Parkway from a historical perspective, the Conference Committee was vitally concerned with the future. Accordingly, Gary Everhardt, Parkway Superintendent, provided a detailed and informative presentation which examined the future of the Parkway and shared details about research and studies currently being conducted by him and the Parkway staff. Conference participants later had an opportunity to share their ideas for the Parkway’s future with Mr. Everhardt and representatives of the National Park Service.

As had been the hope of the Planning Committee, the true strength of the Blue Ridge Parkway Golden Anniversary Conference lay in its diversity. Over 30 of the papers which were presented at the Conference are shared in this Proceedings. For the convenience of the reader, the contents are divided into five sections based upon subject content. The first section is entitled “Design and Planning” and includes two informative presentations on the role of landscape architect Stanley Abbott in designing and managing Parkway construction. Lynn Miller places the Parkway in historical design perspective, and John Bright discusses the Parkway as a catalyst for environmental design innovation. Jean Muller presents a fascinating look at the innovation incorporated into designing the New Linn Cove Viaduct. Gary Johnson of the National Park Service continues with the future theme initiated by Gary Everhardt in “Strategic Planning: The Means for Seeing Beyond 1987.” Finally, Professor Frank Burggraf poses the question, “Are Parkways Obsolete?”

The second section of the Proceedings focuses on the “History” of the Parkway and includes an important oral history study by Texan Diane Gentry. Gwen Harvey and Alice Hoffman take a look at the resettlement plan carried out by the National Park Service, and Philip Grant reports on the efforts of the North Carolina Congressional delegation during the early political debates surrounding the creation of the Parkway. Les Lamm, Deputy Federal Highway Administrator illuminates the early days of construction on the Parkway, and Pamela Frye shares a student guide for Parkway travelers. Finally, Professor Richard Straw acquaints us with some of the early photographers along the Parkway.

The third section, entitled “Literary and Folk Culture,” provides a glimpse into the cultural heritage of Southern Appalachia. Professor H.R. Stoneback traces the road in Appalachian lore and literature, and Parks Lanier shares a metaphorical look at Mabry Mill, the Parkway’s most popular attraction.

Folklorist Tom McGowan tells us about the life and craft of National Heritage Fellow Bertha Cook who has served as a demonstrator on the Parkway. Professors Jody Brown and Rex Stephenson discuss folk tales of the eastern Blue Ridge, and Thomas Rain Crowe shares the perspectives of the Native Americans through poetry and prose.

Our fourth section, focusing on “Environmental and Economic” concerns, contains an interesting assessment of land use attitudes among Appalachians living along the Parkway by Professor James Shepherd. Biologist Dan Pittillo traces the seasonal plant changes which help make the Parkway so popular. David Hill, a landscape architect, in a unique analysis, suggests that technological ruins and sculpture serve as a noble expression of the Parkway’s man-machine-land relationship. William Hooper discusses the importance of agriculture to the character of the Parkway, and Mark Bonn shares his research on the benefits sought by tourists on the Parkway. Robert McLellan and Dominic Dottavio discuss the use of private concessioners along the Parkway and the role the Parkway is playing in the revision of National Park Service policy. Finally, a brief sampling of photographs of the Parkway, which were part of a much larger exhibit, are included. Gil Leebrick captures the varied moods of the Parkway in magnificent black and white photography.

The fifth and final section consists of our three winning “Student Essays” by Kelly Draughn, Suzy Deyton, and Marci Ledford. Each is a very special personal statement about the Parkway and the people who live along it.

In closing, we dedicate these Proceedings and the Blue Ridge Parkway Golden Anniversary Conference to the ingenuity and labor of all the men and women who have played a part in designing, constructing and maintaining this great national treasure.

*Barry M. Buxton*  
Conference Chairman



Gary Everhardt



Stewart Udall



William Mott

## KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

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# The Future of the Parkway

by  
Gary Everhardt

Conference participants, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.  
Good morning.

I am happy to be with you this morning if for no reason other than to congratulate and extend my appreciation to Dr. Barry Buxton, who conceived the idea for this conference, put together a committee to plan for it, and now, this morning, has seen it become a reality.

Even though we are just getting started, I would like for you to join me in giving Barry, his staff and his committee a round of applause for their efforts.

When I look at the conference program for the next two days, I begin to feel a bit out of order. Most of you are here to examine the impacts the Parkway has had on its region over the past fifty years. But the first thing on your program this morning is me talking about the future.

At first thought, my topic might seem out of context with the remainder of the program. But when you think further, it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate the past from either the present or the future. It is the foundation on which we must build. We must never forget that today once was yesterday's tomorrow.

What if Stanley Abbott, Ed Abbuehl....and Sam Weems....had taken only a short-term approach when their minds began to piece together the vision that has become a *park reality for the ages*?

It is easy to see that they planned well for us. Can we do any less for those who very possibly will be seated at a conference similar to this fifty years from now?

I ask you to join me today in what perhaps might be speculation about the future, but it is speculation that is well founded on the lessons of the past and, in my opinion, thus has merit for that reason.

Construction on the Blue Ridge Parkway began September 11, 1935, when men with the Nello L. Teer Construction Company of Durham, North Carolina, cut through a barbed wire fence bordering what now is North Carolina Route 18 and headed south.

That spot is but a few hundred feet from the Parkway's Cumberland Knob recreation area, where about 48 hours from now we will begin a day-long series of events and activities to celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the start of construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

You all are invited to join us for that day and I hope that you will. Buses will leave here at 8:30 Wednesday morning and will have you back by 3:00 p.m. You will have an opportunity to hear remarks by the director of the

National Park Service (who also will be your luncheon speaker tomorrow), the governors of the state of North Carolina and the commonwealth of Virginia, and the sons of two men who have been given a lion's share of the credit for originating the Blue Ridge Parkway concept—Senator Harry Flood Byrd Junior, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt Junior.

As the Golden Anniversary celebration comes to a close, we will begin to direct all of our attention to the Grandfather Mountain area a few miles from here. That is the site of the last remaining uncompleted section of the Parkway. If all goes well, we should eliminate that "*missing link*" sometime during 1987. Then our visitors will be able to travel 470 miles from Shenandoah National Park to Great Smoky Mountains National Park with no stop signs, no commercial traffic, no strip development....and no blinking neon lights.

They will have the opportunity to experience, however, endless scenic vistas, an abundance of native flora and fauna, historic structures, accommodating concessioners, campgrounds, picnic areas and the dozens of other attributes that have made the Blue Ridge Parkway the most popular National Park system area *east* of San Francisco Bay.

After some fifty-two years, the Blue Ridge Parkway will be complete—or *will it*?

When the motor road is fully open, will the Parkway be finished in terms of development and will our role as managers be one simply of housekeeping and caretaking?

That's a question I urge you to keep in mind as you speak and listen to the accomplishments and impacts of the past during this conference. Will the Parkway really have been completed when we hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony over at Grandfather Mountain in 1987? I hope that next week, or next month, or even next year you will give me your thoughts on that question.

I don't think there is any question or any doubt about the appeal and resultant success of the Blue Ridge Parkway. What you will hear over the next two days will provide ample testimony to that question.

But will that appeal and success continue? If so, for how long? Do visitors enjoy the Parkway because we provide them with what they desire? Or did we attract more than nineteen million visits last year even though we didn't really meet all visitor needs and expectations? If that is the case, just what are those needs and what is the potential? Do we really want to reach it?

More questions. Any time you deal with the future you also deal with an endless search for answers.

We have initiated such a search, and believe we are on our way to finding, if not answers, then certainly rather clear cut directions to explore and possibly follow.

Late last winter, we invited two groups of citizens with diverse interests and areas of expertise to meet with us and begin to look at what the Parkway

might expect over the *next* fifty years. These groups, with about a dozen members each, represented the state of North Carolina and the commonwealth of Virginia. The North Carolina group met for two days in Asheville, while the Virginians met for the same period of time at Peaks of Otter.

These meetings were on purpose loosely structured. We attempted to create an atmosphere in which participants would actively give us their own thoughts and perceptions rather than react to what we had to say. To say that we were pleased with the results would be a gross understatement.

Group members, some of whom are in this room today, identified what they consider the major values of the Parkway as it exists today. They also listed current issues and began to look at the future by defining trends that could result in issues and impacts.

The number and depth of values and issues expressed by the two groups illustrates the strong interest members had—and *I hope still have*—in the Parkway. It was surprising to learn how aware they are of the complex relationships that exist as the Parkway runs through two states, 29 counties and seven congressional districts, not to mention some 5,000 adjacent private property owners.

Although those March meetings were held some 300 miles apart with different people in attendance, what each group had to say was remarkably similar. They collectively saw these as the Parkway's outstanding present values:

1. An easily accessible place to escape the stress and routine of everyday life.
2. An almost endless opportunity to view the scenic beauty of the southern Appalachian landscape.
3. Contributions to local economies through travel and tourism and
4. Resources and facilities that provided needed recreational and interpretive opportunities.

The major issues affecting the Parkway values today are:

1. Urbanization and other forms of encroachment and
2. The dynamic relationship between the Parkway and its neighbors and the unavoidable impacts they have on each other.

Participants also saw these present issues as continuing to affect the Parkway in the future. In addition, they feel that as the Parkway matures, management will face mounting challenges to preserve and protect its natural and cultural as well as visual resources.

What will we do to cope with these issues and face these challenges? Here is what the planning groups recommended:

Inventory, document and establish levels of significance for natural, cultural and visual resources in order that their protection can be more easily assured.

Develop a computerized system for storing and managing resource information so that data can be quickly updated and modeled to support planning and decision making.

Initiate research to determine the economic worth of the Parkway to adjacent cities and counties.

Develop and employ a marketing plan to acquaint neighbors in particular and the public in general with the economic value of the Parkway.

Work with various jurisdictions to determine the significant natural, cultural and visual resources related to the Parkway, but outside its boundary and develop a land protection plan that relates resource protection to economics, and lastly

Establish an appropriate organization or foundation with authority to deal with increasing external influences—such as encroachment—through land acquisition or alternate land protection techniques.

We are excited about this planning process, which really is only beginning. We have found that our judgments about present Parkway values and issues do not differ appreciably from those of our randomly selected groups. We also share similar thoughts about future issues. The actions recommended to help us better face the future appear to be *logical* and *feasible*.

What are your thoughts? Do you agree or disagree with what has been developed thus far? Do you see other values, other issues? Do you have additional recommendations for construction of a firmer management foundation?

I hope that you do, and, as I mentioned earlier, I hope you will give them to us. I have with me summaries of what was developed by each of the state groups. Please pick up a copy and use it for background and information and possibly as a stimulus for generation of your own thoughts.

We believe this process, with your input added to that of others, eventually will provide the answers to many of the questions I posed earlier. At the least, we certainly will become much better informed.

In the shorter term, one of our primary goals is to locate the Blue Ridge Parkway headquarters where it is accessible from the motor road. Our present location in downtown Asheville is several miles removed from the Parkway and can be extremely difficult for a visitor to reach.

In addition, a location on the Parkway would put us in much closer touch with day-to-day operations.

Another thing we want to begin to investigate is visitation. We had more than 19-million visits in 1984 and very probably will exceed 20-million by quite a bit this anniversary year. At the present rate of growth, which is about five per cent per year, we could reach 25 million annually by 1990.

How much is too much? At what point will the volume of traffic and

resultant increased use begin to degrade the Parkway experience for most visitors? We don't know, but we need to begin to try to find out. We also need to explore various alternatives—such as alternate forms of transportation—and possibly adjusting use patterns at recreational sites at various times—providing additional visitor use information and service facilities in order to mitigate the problem.

As you can see, we have and will have plenty to keep us busy both short-term and long-term. I am convinced the Blue Ridge Parkway will never become static or that those of us associated with it will become mere housekeepers or caretakers.

The completion of the motor road two years from now simply is the end of one era and the beginning of another. It's an exciting prospect and I for one am looking forward to it.

I appreciate the opportunity to be with you here this morning and to give you what perhaps is a little different perspective from which to view the proceedings of the next two days. We wish you well now and in the future and encourage you to reciprocate with your assistance.

Thank you for your interest in the Blue Ridge Parkway—its past, its present, and its future.

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# Environmental Concerns and the Blue Ridge Parkway

by  
Stewart L. Udall

Good afternoon. I want to thank Barry and Gary and the others for inviting me to come back. I've been on this campus before and I've been on this Parkway before, in fact, on the Parkway more times than one as Granny Liles was reminding me, and I have had a very interesting day reminiscing, thinking about this extraordinary project and what it means to the country. I'm going to do what gray haired people have a right to do, reminisce a little bit and look backward. I'll look forward at the end and not entirely devoted to the old days in sentiment. I want to say what an exciting thing it was for me to hear Mr. Jolly's presentation this morning. One of the people, the literary people that I got to know when I was Secretary of the Interior, was Thornton Wilder. A friend of mine a year ago finished a biography of Thornton Wilder and called it *The Enthusiast*. That was his personality, and I thought of that word as I heard Harley's marvelous presentation.

I had occasion in the 1960's to become acquainted with how the Blue Ridge Parkway happened. As a politician, it fascinated me and I learned some things from Harley's booklet and from his presentation that I didn't know. There is a rich story there. All of you who saw his slide presentation can see how exciting it was. And one of the little hints that I ought to drop on the group today. There needs to be a film, not just for the people in North Carolina or the people in Virginia, but for all, that tells this extraordinary story. I think you have to hear all of the presentation from the Landscape Architect from Arkansas on whether the Blue Ridge Parkway is obsolete or whether it will ever be replicated; I suspect he's right that it won't, but, nevertheless, this is a story of politics; it's a story conservation; one of the great stories; it's a story of how things evolve.

I want to make a few comments of my own about my reading of this particular event in history. Then, my first comment about the glory of the Blue Ridge Parkway is that it is a ribbon running down the spine of one of the most beautiful sections in all of the United States which, believe me, has much natural beauty. This dry term that we use "outdoor recreation" always bothers me. Maybe we don't have an exact term to describe what I'm thinking about. Robert Frost, the poet, had a line in one of his poems that talks about the need to be versed in country things. That's what this park does. It gives these millions of people a window into the natural world if they have eyes to see, and many of them, unfortunately, do not. That's part of what this park was all about.

I'm sorry Former Congressman Roy Taylor couldn't be here. He was one of my favorite Congressman. He was, in his own North Carolina conservative way, a person who, when he decided to do something, got it done. And in the last year or so that I was Secretary of the Interior, he got through this wonderful piece of legislation which has now been buried, apparently, to extend the Blue Ridge Parkway on into Georgia. He and I worked on that.

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site is one of my little stories that I like to repeat. In the summer of 1967, Carl Sandburg died. I had become friends with the Sandburg family. I made a quick trip down, and we had a national memorial service on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial for Carl Sandburg. I talked with Mrs. Sandburg and said, "If we could have that home just as it is, what a wonderful gift it would be to the people of this country." And she wanted to do it. I went to Roy, and I said, "Roy, we've got one year to get this done. Can we work together?" And we did. We got it accomplished. I give you that, not in a way of boasting but of telling you how important the politics and conservation is, and how subtle sometimes the ways are that things get done.

If you heard Harley Jolley's presentation this morning, there was some fascinating overtones that I want to dwell on for a moment because it reminds us in this day of our affluence, and our technology, and our power, and everything else, how things like this got done. Because if there was any period in my lifetime and in the history of the United States when this country was flat on its back, it was in 1933. Some people, even some of the historians, haven't thoroughly recognized, in my opinion, the extent to which the New Deal was a national conservation program: the CCC camps; the way that Franklin Roosevelt, at \$.05 an acre, spent Public Works money; and bought, I think, 20 million acres of forest land so that the eastern part of the United States could have national forests. The time was right for an idea. Then, minds were receptive for something like the Blue Ridge Parkway, additions to the National Park System, and reforestation. All of these things were part of what a country that was broke decided to do to start rebuilding for the future. It was a conservation program, and we haven't sufficiently recognized that.

Another aspect of this that Mr. Jolley covered, and I just wanted to develop it a little bit further, is what a unique program this was in terms of federal/state cooperation. It was not a national project as such.

One of the most fascinating documents is that telegram from Senator Byrd. I read it in the book that he sent to the other leaders telling them, in effect, here's a great opportunity to do something they weren't saying the federal government should do. We're going to have to lead out and get together. If we do, here's something can be done that will be beneficial, economically, and otherwise, for our states and our people. And maybe it is in this direction that we're headed now.

We have another corner with our national debt. I guess I'm feeling more an old time reactionary every day. I'm appalled at our economic situation which is a corner we're not turning because we may find our national government in a serious economic situation. More and more of our leadership will have to come from the states in the conservation field. And more and more may have to come perhaps from generous magnanimous private people like those who have given large tracts to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Maybe here's a pattern that we go back to the past in order to get things done.

I was talking with Mr. Jolley, too, we didn't have time to finish our conversation, about this whole question of "Well, where did the idea come from? Who launched it? Was it Franklin Roosevelt? Was it Harry Byrd? Was it Strauss? Was it others? And so on." And I told him that I didn't think that was really very important as to who had the idea because the idea probably evolved and grew. What is important is that you had a mix of people who would respond to an opportunity: some of them may have been local people; some of them may have been highway officials at the state level; and some of them may have been Secretaries of the Interior like Harold Ickes. Certainly it fascinates me knowing his reputation later than having been here in the Congress with him for ten years. Harry Byrd, Senator from Virginia was conservative in the old fashioned sense. And, yet, here was something that he got enthusiastic about. In fact, most real conservatists, *real conservatists*, I stress that, are conservationists. The most conservative people in the country in my view are conservationists. And Harry Byrd was a conservationist. That's why he saw this as an opportunity, an idea, a concept.

The Congressman from this area, Bob Doughton, was written up back in the 40's as a staunch conservative against some of Franklin Roosevelt's ideas. Here, he was a champion of this idea. There were others who made their contributions. But, the states really had the initiative. If the states didn't put up the money and didn't buy the land, there would be no Blue Ridge Parkway. I believe the whole incredible story of this has to be told because I think there may be a great lesson or lessons for our country to learn if we look at how this happened because we may need this kind of pattern of cooperation in the future.

Let me comment on the other aspect of this: laws that you had to take private land, which is part of having this Parkway and certainly of having the Shenandoah National Park and partly true, too, the Smokies. All of this conceived and came forth in the middle of the Great Depression fifty years ago, in the middle of the 1930s. In the whole history of the National Park Service and its expansion, you can't believe the problems of local opposition and of land owners fighting you tooth and nail we had in the 1960's when we were expanding the Park Service. Granny tells me, what killed Roy Taylor's idea of extending this magnificent Parkway on down into Georgia is that the developers didn't want to let the land go. And in the Shenandoah

and parts of the Parkway, who in the west we call the "hill people," were there. These people had lived in the hollows for a long time. I know, particularly with Shenandoah National Park, they had to just take their land, move them out, and re-settle them. Some people had lived there with their families for centuries. And this always strikes you as something rather harsh even though they get whatever the property is worth. There is no way the government can take the property otherwise. But it is being taken for a common purpose, for a national purpose. All of us in this room are stock holders, owners of our little slice of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Now nobody, unless we are breaking the law, can call us a trespasser and say "Get off. It is my property. I own it. It's part of my heritage." And that, that's very difficult. But, here you had, again, these very conservative politicians of that time willing to face that issue and that question and say, "We're sorry, but we're going to have to buy your land. We'll pay you what it's worth. We're going to have to take private land in order to put in place a magnificent public asset." So let's, let's not overlook that aspect as part of what's made this possible.

I was astonished, just astonished at breakfast this morning when I asked Gary one of the questions in the back of my mind that I wanted to discuss today. What has been the cost, the total cost to date of the Blue Ridge Parkway? Nearly five hundred miles, one hundred forty million dollars. Breathtaking! Breathtaking! The price tag Harry Byrd had in his telegram, if they had acted as swiftly as they could to get it done, was sixteen million. And, what are we doing, what are we doing today? Think of our taxpayer dollars. The taxes that we pay, and what we are doing. The town that I'm living in now is developing a smog problem like Phoenix. They're spending three quarters of a billion dollars, which is five or six times what has been spent on this whole magnificent project, to run a freeway through the middle of a city. That's what we're doing with our highway money these days. I, as a freshman Congressman thirty years ago, voted for the interstate highway program, and I supposed we needed it. Nobody voted no, but I have a lot of reservations now about highways in the wrong places. I think the job is done. And, maybe someday we'll back off. Maybe the Blue Ridge Parkway idea is not simply something whose time has past. Maybe there will be chances at least to do things like it, but not on this scale to be sure.

I used to say, "West Virginia ought to be the Colorado of the east as it has so many magnificent rivers and trout streams and so on, but most of them are poisoned by acid rain drainage out of the coal mines. And President Kennedy in the 1960's, because of what West Virginia did for him, wanted to help West Virginia. One morning, I had an idea. I said, "Let's have a Blue Ridge Parkway somewhere in West Virginia." And I think I got the Park Service to help me, and we addressed up a piece of paper and floated it around. It turned out that the Governor and the Congressional people, and so on, didn't want to have the Blue Ridge Parkway in West Virginia..

They wanted more miles of interstate highways so they could get the trucks on through. And what an incredible missed opportunity that was. And so maybe as we settle down and as the automobile part of our lives slowly shrinks, as it's going to begin to do in the decade, or maybe a little more, we may see that there still is an opportunity to do some things. It is fascinating even in the western part of the United States, in some of the big sky country that you have there, that we haven't taken this concept and used it there the same way as the Appalachian Trail, a great monument to this country and a great opportunity for a unique form of outdoor recreation.

These are some of my thoughts and sentiments as I come back here today. I think this is a good celebration and I hope the rest goes as well as the beginning. I believe that there is something very vital and very important that this fifty year project says to the country.

Since I'm in North Carolina, I want to say something about North Carolina. I've already talked about Roy Taylor and some of the other North Carolina folk who were conservationists. This state of all the states in the east, on the eastern seaboard, I believe, has had the most foresight in conservation.

Another interesting thing for you historians to work on: When we began in 1961 with the concept that we ought to have a string of national seashores as a necklace around the whole country. There was one in existence then, Cape Hatteras. North Carolina along with Virginia pioneered this idea. They had the only national seashore. This state had provided the leadership. This state had acquired or contributed some of the land. Yes, there was a wealthy philanthropist family that had done some things, too; but, North Carolina had set the stage and the style for that kind of action. And, while I was Secretary, we added Cape Lookout. There was the support, and there was state support and state money to do those things. Here in the west you not only have fine state parks but you have the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Great Smoky Park, and so on. There has been a constant commitment in the state to these big projects. I don't know whether it's died out now or anything, but I hope it doesn't because I think you have said something to the nation and to other states about what can be done if you make a commitment to conservation. And as long as our population is still continuing to grow in some parts of this country, our work is not done.

It bothers me, Gary, (to hear you say this morning,) and I sensed a tone of concern on your part, "We are now the most visited National Park in the country—twenty million people, a five percent increase a year. We'll be up to twenty-five in five years." What is the carrying capacity of this magnificent park? That's a question that had to worry everybody in this room. How far can you go until it's overloaded? And the quality, the more people that come in, the more the quality of the experience goes down.

I think one of the wonderful things is the open endedness of this kind of park. You're not under the strict rules that you have in national parks.

I was interested that cross-country skiing is now an activity at certain times of the year in this park. The fact that there are new forms of enjoyment of the out of doors means they can be incorporated in. And as the automobile shrinks maybe we will need a spine of walking trails that young people can walk in to the park and may be more kinds of facilities like the a few places that you have along the Appalachian Trail and so on. That's the great thing about this. It isn't done. It isn't done. And that's what Gary was talking about this morning. We have to rethink it. We have to replan it. We have to decide to add to it if that is necessary.

They tell me that the idea, the Roy Taylor idea, that I'm proud I helped him with, to expand into North Carolina is probably dead. Development has preempted the opportunity that was there. You had Granny Liles to tell me the strange situation where developers and environmentalists stood side by side and wielded the sword that killed the extension. And that's an interesting and subtle commentary on the times, too.

Two or three final points, and then I'll quit. As you can see, this has been a great stimulation to me to come back here. I was not aware, and it stuck in my mind now, that he and his colleagues have not gotten their just recognition. Stan Abbott, he's gone now, but the Landscape Architecture, the concepts, the ideas, you can see them. That was Mission 66. Gary adopted so many of the ideas and concepts that were developed here. When you saw those clear-cuts in roads and then you saw what is there today, you marvel at the conception and the idea that these people have. One of the most precious and valuable things is what has been done in terms of historic preservation.

If there is any program that I would like to see it's the one that Alan Jabbour will have tomorrow, on arts and crafts. My wife worked for the National Council for Traditional Arts, and we had from these hills many of the singers and guitarists and other people still clinging and hanging on to, like the western Indians, the arts that they learned and they knew and how valuable this is and the fact that you can drive through Blowing Rock and these other places and see arts and crafts are a business, something the whole region takes pride in. Again, there is a marvelous variety that you have here.

So, these are thoughts that I have on this day and I'm glad you thought to invite me and ask me to come back because maybe, maybe I don't like to be, try to be prophetic about economics, but I have the suggestion that our good times are not going to last and that we may have another great crash perhaps, another time when we have to tighten our belts, another time when we have to ask ourselves what is really important. There was a phrase that was on everybody's tongues in the 1930's. The old timers here will remember it. It's not all forgotten and it was a way of consoling ourselves that although our lives were rather stingy and bleak in some ways, only in some ways, that there were consolations, and that phrase was "the best things

in life are free." You don't hear it much anymore. The best things in life now all have a price tag on them. I don't like sports anymore because there are more dollar signs on the sports pages these days than you have in the business columns, if you know what I mean. What are the best things in life, the things that mean the most to us. Friendship? Love? Of course, things like that. The beauty that is all around us. It's there, it's free; if we'll take time to take an interest in it and so on. And that's the thought that I want to leave with you as one of your elders. I'm getting along, you know. This is a verse, Gary, that I saw (it's an old one that comes from an English Tombstone, I think), on the mantle of Mardy Marie's place in the Grand Tetons. And I'll end with this as my thought for the day. "The wonder of the world, the beauty and the power, the shapes of things, their color, lights, and shades. These I saw. Look ye also while life lasts." Thank you, have a good conference.

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# Future Initiatives of the National Park Service

by  
*William Penn Mott, Jr.*

When I was asked to take the job of Director of the National Park Service I did what I did when I was asked by Governor Reagan to take over the state park system I said I wanted to talk to the top man. In California I didn't know Governor Reagan and I asked to meet with him. I went to his office and told him I was a Park professional and I understood some of the problems of the state park system and that I would be operating the state park system as a park professional. He said that's the reason I asked you to come here. You run the system; I'll handle the politics. That's the way it was for eight and one-half years. So when I was asked to become a National Park Service Director, which I had been asked about before but had other problems that I was working on, I said I wanted to talk to the Secretary and I did and I had twelve points that I said that under those conditions I would be glad to come to Washington. About a week later I got a call saying the twelve points were acceptable, would I come to Washington and I said yes.

And I would like to tell you about those twelve points because I think they are significant. I think they are important, I think they are going to spell change in the National Park Service, and change is difficult to come by; but, I think it will happen. We have in the Service an outstanding collection of dedicated, talented people. And the only thing that is preventing them from doing the job that needs to be done is for them to get their light from under the bushel basket out into the open and take the leadership and responsibility that the National Park Service should take. And that's happening. And I'm very pleased to see what has taken place in the last ninety days and I think you are going to see the results of this new creative approach in the next year or so. So, I would like to go over these twelve points and I think you'll find them rather interesting.

**Point 1.** Developing long-range strategy to better protect our natural, cultural, and recreational resources. In going through these points, I'd like to just briefly touch on how they may relate to the Blue Ridge Parkway. I'm not as familiar with the Blue Ridge Parkway as many of you in this room. I have been on it. I came here before I was even interested in the Directorship and spent some time here in connection with a couple of meetings so I am familiar with the Blue Ridge Parkway. But again, in listening to comments this morning, and in talking to individuals, it seems to me that one of the areas that you need to put a great deal more emphasis on and that is the cultural resources that exist along and adjacent to the Blue Ridge

Parkway. I think from all of the literature that I've been reading and looking at, there is a great deal of interest in the natural resources and the scenic beauty, and so forth, but I think you are not taking advantage of the cultural resources that exist or did exist in this area. And I can tell you that there is developing in this country a great deal of interest in our cultural and historic background and we need to recognize this and begin to take advantage of it. And I think you have some tremendous opportunities here of developing the cultural resources within the confines or the influence of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**Point 2.** Pursue a creative expanded land protection initiative. And this is very important to the National Park Service. We're beginning to understand through research that the boundaries of our Parks do not represent the ecosystem of that particular Park. In Yellowstone, in order to protect the ecosystem of Yellowstone National Park, which when it was established was considered to be a very, very large area, we're beginning to realize that we need to expand the boundary lines of that Park almost double. Now that doesn't mean we're going to buy the property. It does mean that there has to be a closer relationship between the federal agencies that are involved. Ninety percent of this expanded area of Yellowstone, for example, is under the operation of the National Park Service. What I've been saying lately to the federal agencies is that land does not belong to the individual federal agencies. The National Park Service does not own that land. The land is owned by all of you in this room and all of the other people in the United States. We are the stewards of that land. The National Park Service are stewards of the land under our responsibility. The same is true with the Forest Service. The same is true with BLM. It doesn't belong to individual agencies. And once they understand that concept, then the opportunity of working together to protect the resources becomes a very simple process. But if you say, I own the land and I've talked to the various agencies and they constantly say it's our land and I say it's not your land. I own it, the people in the United States own it, you are the stewards. When we once understand that, then we don't have a problem anymore of working out the relationships to benefit the protection of the resource. And I wonder, in connection with the Blue Ridge Parkway, what it means to the Blue Ridge Parkway and to this area when you are getting a large percentage of people coming into this area who are on retirement. Previously, the area was worked by people who worked in the area and not retired in the area. What does that mean to the Blue Ridge Parkway? How do you handle that kind of a situation when you are dealing with not working people but retired people? Quite a change, and I think you need to understand that.

**Point 3.** Stimulate and increase our interpretive and visitor service activities for greater public support. I think this is tremendously important. We are going to put a great deal of effort into interpretation. It's not going to be something that is secondary. It's going to be one of our very, very

important functions. And I've heard over and over again people say, I don't think that these urban recreation areas ought to be in the National Park System. There's been a lot of discussion about that. Gateway, Golden Gate, Cuyahoga, and so forth, are urban recreational areas. How important are these? They are tremendously important to the National Park Service. Not as scenic areas, not as preserving great cultural resources, but as educational institutions. One of the things that we are going to do in connection with these urban recreational areas, is to turn them into universities of learning about the out of doors and how people should respect the out of doors, how they deal with it, how they relate to it. I was in Yellowstone not so long ago and here was a lady from Los Angeles with a child about three or four years old trying to put it on a buffalo's back to take a picture. That's the problem we're running into. It's not unlike the problem that I ran into down in the Santa Monica Mountains, another one of our urban recreation areas. And I was following a school group that was going out on one of the fire trails and the teacher was telling the students about the birds and the bees, the flowers and so forth and so on, and all of a sudden a little boy stopped dead in his tracks. And I looked at him and I said, "What is the matter?" And he said, "You know, there's dust on this road." And that tells you something. That's what we're running into. An urban population. Now another thing that I think is very, very important and that is that the state legislators and the Congressmen that are coming into the state and into the federal government, in the next twenty-five years basically, are going to come from these great urban centers, and unless we build support amongst the urban population, we're going to find it very, very difficult to maintain the quality of our National Park System. And that's true of local parks, and it's true of state parks. So we need to begin a major educational program so that the people will understand and be able to relate to the out of doors and the out of door experience.

**Point 4.** Share effectively with the public our understanding of critical resource issues. Now you may wonder about that particular point, but I've heard over and over again from our interpreters they are not given the opportunity to discuss critical resource issues. We're going to be discussing these. We're going to be discussing acid rain and what it means and tell people about it because most people do not understand. They read about acid rain but they don't know what it means. They don't understand its implication. We're going to be talking about acid rain. We're going to be talking about those things that are critical to the cultural and natural resource protection within the National Park System.

**Point 5.** Increase public understanding of the role and function of the National Park System. The National Park System consists of three hundred and thirty-seven units. They are not all national parks. One of the things I heard over and over again in Washington was that we have twelve crown jewels—that's Yosemite, Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, etc., etc. And I thought

to myself, how could that be that we only have twelve crown jewels. I had been to the Ford Theater, which is a unit of the National Park System. In the opening of that Ford Theater this past season, there was an actor standing on the stage dramatically lighted and he pointed to the Lincoln box and he said, "Mr. Lincoln, I want to tell you about the United States today." A very dramatic presentation. After the program, I went outdoors and here was the Washington Monument, another unit of the National Park System. That lighted by a full moon. The inspiration, the recreation, the kind of feeling that I got from those two incidents was not dissimilar to the same kind of situation and the same inspiration and the same recreation that I received when I went to Yellowstone the first time and saw the falls in the full moon. And from that point on, I said to our people, there are not going to be twelve crown jewels. From now on, we're going to talk about three hundred and thirty-seven jewels in the crown and this Parkway is one of those jewels and that's the kind of attitude we're going to have. In addition to that, we have a massive educational program that we must put into effect so that people understand that we have national parks, we have national monuments, we have national seashores, we have national historic sites, we have national historic buildings, we have all kinds of units within the National Park System. Each one important, each one providing the diversity and the interest and the excitement and the educational opportunities within the National Park Service. This we are going to be able to define. We're going to have management techniques for each one of these classifications so there would be no misunderstanding why, in the National Park, we do one thing, but in the National Seashore, we manage it a little differently. A national recreational area has a different connotation for a management point of view than a national park. And so, that's another major job that we will have in order for the public to understand what the National Park System is all about.

**Point 6.** Expand the role and involvement of citizen and citizen groups at all levels of the National Park Service. You here understand how important it is to bring volunteers into the Service. There is no way that the National Park System can operate without citizen participation. We need more citizen participation, not less, in order to do the job and it is the citizens that provide the direction, the information, and the knowledge that helps us to do a better job. And I want to say how much I appreciate the citizen involvement at this meeting and what you have done in the past because without you, I am certain that the Blue Ridge Parkway would never have developed into this wonderful project that it is at the present time. So citizen involvement is terribly important and we are going to increase that involvement over the years.

**Point 7.** Seeking better balance between visitor management and resource management. We concentrated most of our thoughts on how do we manage the resources both cultural and natural resources. We haven't

given too much attention to how you manage the people that are using the National Park System. And, unless we understand how to manage people, we're not going to be able to preserve and protect the resources. So, we're going to be putting a great deal of emphasis into this whole program of how do we train our rangers and our personnel to understand management of people. And this is another new area which we will be putting a great deal of emphasis so that we can understand better the management of people in order to protect the resource.

**Point 8.** Enhance our ability to meet the diverse uses that the public expects of the National Park Service. We can't in every unit of the National Park Service provide for all the recreational needs of the people, but we need to recognize that recreation is an important element of the National Park System not just the preservation of the natural and cultural resources but provided for the recreational demands of the public. So, we need to look at this very carefully and to understand and to develop the recreational potential of areas without destroying the natural and cultural resources and this is a very delicate balance but I think that we have the talent, I think we have the personnel that can handle this kind of a problem once they direct their attention to that problem and create the necessary environment to provide for the recreational needs of people coming to the National Park Service.

**Point 9.** Expand career opportunity for our employees. This is a very important element because we are not going to be expanding as rapidly as we have in the past. Our growth is going to be slower. The opportunity for employees to advance within the Service or to gain employment within the Service is going to be less from now on. But there are opportunities to provide for our employees. One of the things we are going to do and I talked with Horace Albright about this just a week or so ago. Horace Albright was the second Director of the National Park Service, a man with great patience, a man with great understanding, who, in fact, developed the National Park System that we know today. I talked with Horace about this. We're going to set up a Horace Albright fund within the National Park Service Foundation and the interest from that fund is going to provide for the sabbatical leave of employees within the National Park Service. University professors, ministers all know about sabbatical leave. Within the National Park Service, that has never been a concept. We're not going to make that a concept and employees are going to be able to take sabbatical leave to visit other parks. We have employees who have never seen the western parks, for example, or people in the west who have never come and enjoyed some of the eastern parks. That's going to be part of the sabbatical leave or travel to Europe or to South America or Australia or to get additional education. A very important tool in my mind to provide for the morale and increase the efficiency and the effectiveness of members of the National Park Service family.

**Point 10.** Plan, design, and maintain appropriate park facilities. One of the things that we will be looking at is the proper design of our facilities. We have in the past in some instances built facilities that were beyond the capacity of the park that were not appropriate to that park, were not harmonious with the park setting. We are now taking a good hard look at this to make sure that the facilities are harmonious with the park setting, that they are efficient, and effective, and that we do not spend money beyond what is necessary. This is another area that we will be giving some attention to.

**Point 11.** Develop a team relationship between concessionaires and the National Park Service. In the past, we have had some problems along these lines where the concessionaire, because of political influence and so forth, has attempted to run the National Park unit. That's coming to a halt. We are taking charge. We are going to take the leadership in this particular area and we are going to work with the concessionaires, but they're going to have to also understand that they're part of the team. Another area in which we're going to be looking at is the fees that are being charged on concessions. I couldn't believe it when I went to one park and found out that in a \$50 million dollar gross business we were receiving from the concessionaire half of one percent. That's been going on now for quite a number of years but, for those of you who may be concessionaires in this room, that is coming to a halt. I don't think it's fair for us to provide the influence, the beauty, the quality of a National Park System to a concessionaire who does a \$50 million dollar gross business and pays the National Park Service one-half of one percent. That is not going to be the way we're going to develop this team relationship from this point on.

**Point 12.** Foster and encourage more creativity, efficiency, and effectiveness in the management and administration of the National Park System. I've told all of our personnel from this point on, when the facts are in, make a decision. I call this creative decision making because some times we will make a mistake, but we are going to make decisions. Unless you make decisions, there is no way to think creatively. What is very important from this point on is that we think creatively and take the leadership in doing the job that's necessary to maintain units of the National Park System in an effective, efficient manner. And I'm satisfied that we have the personnel that can do the job that we have people who think creatively, who can effectively make decisions, we need only to do that to take the light from under the bushel basket and move out in a highly creative way and I feel very strongly about this because the National Park Service is the only unit of government that is responsible for the quality of life in these United States. In addition to that, we provide for their health and for their productivity in this country and I've come to the conclusion just recently that there's one other element in the National Park Service that is extremely important and it makes it necessary for us to take creative leadership and to make decisions. That is what the National Park Service represents to the people of the United

States of America, stability. Think about it. Yosemite is always going to be here. The Blue Ridge Parkway is always going to be here. Grand Canyon is always going to be here. There is no other institution that represents stability in the United States. And I think people are searching for that. Cities are being rebuilt constantly. People are moving up and down the country, back and forth across the country, and so the National Park Service and its units represent stability and people come back over and over again because they recognize that here is stability, and that's something that they cherish.

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## DESIGN AND PLANNING

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# The Parkway—A Uniquely American Construct— Is It Obsolete?

by  
*Frank B. Burggraf*

## EARLY ROAD CONSTRUCTION

Broadway, the great white way in New York City, is a street that began as an Indian trail from lower Manhatten to Washington Heights. It developed as a road because it sensibly negotiated the grade at a fairly gentle slope. Similarly most early roads developed from farm-to-market roads or trails. Of the 2½ million miles of rural highways that had accumulated in the U.S. by 1890, almost none were located by scientific or engineering methods. From 1890 through 1900 the demand for better roads led to State aid and State highway construction. Still, most efforts were directed to existing roads with slight alterations of alignment and improvements in road beds and surfaces.

After the federal Highway Act of 1921 States selected the 7% of their mileage that was primary and interstate or intercounty to which Federal aid was applied. Again funding was directed at improvement of existing roads. In early days route selection of new roads, when it occurred, was as likely to be based on the presence of good subgrade material as to achieving better alignment standards.

## THE FIRST PARKWAYS

Parkways developed quite apart from early highways. The Bronx River Parkway, the first, was undertaken to reclaim and preserve a river valley from urban pollution. The road was almost an after-thought and ran to the Kensico reservoir which the City of New York was then just finishing. The Bronx river parkway predated the automobile as a primary mode of transport. Its curves were for horse and buggy speeds but it incorporated many of the characteristics of later parkways. Importantly it acknowledged the recreational value of pleasure driving.

The Westchester County Parkways were built between 1913 and 1930 and stand apart from conventional highway development of the times. They provided four lane, 40 foot-wide roads with ROWs from 200 to 1,700 feet of width. In addition to the Bronx Parkway already mentioned, there were: The Hutchinson River, Saw Mill River, and Cross County Parkways. Their cost totaled \$60 million of which half went to land acquisition. In 1959 and later three were offered to the State of New York which spent \$100 million in a modernization and rehabilitation effort.

Parkways were developed by Westchester County as a part of their parks

and recreation development. The system included a series of recreation areas covering more than 17,000 acres, including 9 miles of beaches and shoreland. Westchester anticipated the use of the automobile for recreation that was to characterize the post war years nationally.

Since 1924 there was similar development of national parkways. The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, between Washington and Mount Vernon, follows the Potomac River. Built by the Public Roads Administration, its graceful alinement is unusual in that it was designed to have no straight tangents in its horizontal alinement.

## THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

During a tour of the Civilian Conservation Corps with President Franklin Roosevelt, Virginia's Senator Harry F. Byrd suggested that a road over the mountain crests linking Shenandoah and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park be constructed. The President then authorized the construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Dudley C. Bayliss, Chief of Parkways in the Division of Design and Construction of the National Park Service, stated:

“Being the first truly rural scenic parkway of such magnitude in the country, the Blue Ridge Parkway has been the pioneer of a new form of recreational development in the national park system. The techniques of park road location and construction have been utilized, though on an expanded scale, since national parkways are essentially elongated parks, in which the campgrounds, picnic areas, lodges and other visitor services are planned and developed at nineteen locations along the route through Virginia and North Carolina, selected to best fit the topography and the requirements of the Project.”

This quote is from an article published in 1957 which the Park Service reprinted. Entitled, “Planning Our National Park Roads and Our National Parkways” this modest publication is an excellent description of the characteristics and objectives of parkway design and the collaboration between the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads. I have used it as a text for my students for many years.

## PARKWAY CHARACTERISTICS

Parkways are uniquely American. What sets most parkways apart from early highways the world over, is the fact parkways were planned and engineered and their location followed conscious design decisions. Unlike highways, they were not intended to follow the most direct route or to expedite travel from one destination to another. Designed to be driven at a modest speed permitting full enjoyment of the scenery, their purpose is

recreational; no commercial traffic is permitted. Whereas highways connect town to town, parkways usually avoid urban areas and their terminals are most often parks, historic sites or recreation areas. Frequently parkways are designed to encompass intermediate locations of special significance of scenic quality.

Compared to early highways, parkways used superior alignment standards. Many used easement (spiral) curves to make the driver easier and more pleasant for the driver as well as the viewer. While some of them were and still are, two lane roads, parkways did pioneer divided separate alignments with travel in opposite directions. They are also safer at night being free from headlight glare of oncoming traffic. These medians not only permitted plantings, but enabled entirely different vertical and horizontal alignments of the separate lanes and greater adjustment to the existing land form.

The wide ROWs which typified parkways permitted extensive landscaping, stabilized shoulders, grade separations between parkway and cross traffic and provision of acceleration and deceleration lanes. The extra width also permitted the landscape architects and engineers to blend the slopes of ditches and cuts and fills into flatter, more natural slopes which were easier to stabilize, more attractive and, in emergencies, safer to traverse.

Billboards are not permitted on parkways and necessary signs are usually as carefully designed and located as other details to minimize their intrusion. The Park Service doesn't even like to use the term signs—signs are part of their "interpretation program."

Bridges, culvert headwalls, railings and the furnishings of every turnout or overlook are designed to be in character with the landscape using natural materials whenever possible.

Once a parkway is placed in service its maintenance becomes important to its functioning. Normally a maintenance plan is prepared which defines: the limits of mowing, vistas to be maintained, where trees will be cut or trimmed to preserve the view, and where the natural vegetation will be permitted to establish itself. Parkways like the Blue Ridge often have scenic easements to preserve the quality of off site views. These must be monitored.

Parkways pioneered mountable curbs and stabilized shoulders.

## THE GOOD IDEA

Today's highways have copied virtually every characteristic of the parkway. Wider ROWs, divided roadways and grade separations at cross roads. Why then ask rhetorically about the obsolescence of the parkway? The several reasons are:

1. the trucking industry
2. the billboard interests
3. the computer and earthmover
4. the Federal Highway Safety Act
5. The loss of the experience and skills of the parkway designers.

Trucks have displaced the railroads in supplying our food and goods. The trucking interests have influenced the design and construction of every aspect of the modern highway. As they often remind you with their little signs, they do pay road user taxes in support of those highways. The highway planners accommodate them with minimum grades, large radius curves, heavy pavements and paved shoulders. There are roadside rest areas but they are not like any scenic turnout on a parkway. They have grown to accommodate large trucks with multiple trailers. To insure that roads are built to their requirements they lobby long and hard. They don't mind your auto fuel tax helping to pay for their roads, but you can bet they are not for any of their taxes going for a road which they will be denied the use of. And while the modern highway embodies many of the characteristics of a parkway they do not respect the landscape, —they go through it on the most direct route possible.

The billboard interests are in the business of selling your views. They have managed to manipulate the highway laws and the state legislatures to retain access to most of the highways and they are unrelenting. Needless to say, they don't like parkways. Even on interstates where they are denied access near the highway they circumvent the prohibition by erecting enormous signs in the distance. No parkway could accommodate such intrusion.

The parkway is designed in the field by people sensitive to the opportunities that nature provides and by careful construction and maintenance. The modern highway is designed in an office from aerial photographs and with the aid of the computer. The modern earthmovers, make response to topography unnecessary. Modern highway design is dragging a standard template across the landscape establishing the shortest routes at those minimum grades that trucks love.

On September 9, 1966, the United States Congress passed the Federal Highway Safety Act. As a consequence of the promulgated standards there has been a concerted effort to make safer all roads that receive federal aid. Everyone is for safety and many consequences of this act have been important contributions to highway safety. Many other actions have destroyed and mutilated parkways and if a parkway were to be constructed it would have a devastating effect on its design and development.

Let us look at the foremost culprit—obstacle clearance.

“Statistics show 80 percent of the vehicles leaving the pavement do not travel more than 30 feet from the edge. This 30 feet has been generally accepted as the desirable width to be maintained clear of obstacles. Slopes within this width should also be maintained relatively flat to permit drivers to regain control of their vehicles.”

Victor W. Anckaitis, Deputy Secretary and Chief Engineer, Pennsylvania Department of Highways, “Implementing The Federal Safety Standards in Pennsylvania, PA. Highway Trans. Conf. 1968.”

Perhaps most vehicles struck obstacles in the first 30 feet because they were there before, now they hit them in the next 30 feet! The fact of the matter is that the best safety records have always been with the older parkways, for a lot of reasons. Certainly the logic of the above statement has not been demonstrated with respect to parkways because most had rock faces, steep dropoffs or trees in the sacred 30 feet.

At the same conference, Herschel Leobowitz, a Professor of Psychology observed:

"In our research program, we are particularly concerned with the effects of fatigue and boredom such as are typically encountered in driving for long periods of time on modern superhighways."

The older parkways with their sharper curves and varying landscape are anything but boring, while the new standards of wider lanes, wider shoulders and 30 additional feet of total clearance mean seeing no landscape at all save very peripherally.

The combination of highspeed and boredom is no assurance of safety.

I mentioned earlier that Westchester turned its parkways over to the State of New York. Some of the monies expended were to upgrade the parkways to the new standards. Now they have become more expressways than parkways. They all boast steel guardrails in their medians, at bridges, etc., but the worst is the changes to my "beloved Taconic". Thought by many to be the finest example of parkway design, it connects the Saw Mill Parkway and the others with upstate New York. One older section which wound around steep topography and had many trees and stonewalls close to the pavement was modified and widened to provide 6 lanes of traffic. It is now a highspeed expressway for that southern portion.

It is my understanding that the Feds wanted to bring the rest of the parkway up to "standard", but some of the New York State highway people who were appalled by what they realized had been done, resisted. They were only able to persuade the Feds by proving the costs of removing the rock would be so great as to make the improvement of questionable cost value. It appears we are going to have to defend the parkways we have, let alone start new ones.

It has been judged necessary that shoulders be paved. Again, this accommodates the trucks, as stabilized turf shoulders have been proven adequate and safe on many parkways. I have a paper by Cedric Buchanan, District Engineer for the Bureau of Public Roads entitled, "Gravel Stabilized Shoulders for Turf as Used on the Natchez Trace Parkway" which traces the experience with them in the early fifties, even with relatively unstable soils. The committee on Roadside Development reviewing that paper observed that information on stabilized turf shoulders had been accumulated since 1945 and that turf shoulders would not rut under auto traffic even after being rain soaked.

There is no reason why all the standards now adopted for highways need be applied to parkways.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the design and construction of new parkways is the loss of the parkway designers. The men who designed the early parkways learned much of their skill in the field. Retirements and death have deprived us of those accumulated skills and there are few engineers and landscape architects left with the experience in siting parkway alignments in places of authority. While traditionally a part of landscape architecture curricula, parkway design has been given less attention and less space in professional education as other subjects of more current application are added to already tight schedules.

Perhaps there is no need for more parkways. The study prepared by the Outdoor Recreation Review Commission however, found driving for pleasure the most important and most frequent recreation activity of Americans. In 1962, an executive order established the Recreation Advisory Council. In 1964, the Council issued a policy statement recommending that a national program of scenic roads and parkways be developed.

President Johnson in 1965, in his message to the Congress on "Natural Beauty of Our Country," referred to the automobile as a principle instrument of recreation and pleasure and stated:

"By making our roads highways to the enjoyment of nature and beauty, we can greatly enrich the life of nearly all our people in city and countryside alike."

In 1965 President Johnson signed Public Law 89-285 to provide scenic development and road beautification of the Federal-aid highway systems, commonly known as the Highway Beautification Act of 1965. Later in the year the Secretary of Commerce transmitted the report to the Recreation advisory Council, "Summary of Findings and Recommendations, The Scenic Roads and Parkways Study together with an Abstract of a Proposed National Program of Scenic Roads and Parkways," and recommended its approval.

The proposed program for scenic roads and parkways deserves our attention. It identifies candidates for improvement and development in every state. The parkway is a uniquely American construct which we have evolved and produced in excellence in many select landscapes throughout the U.S. There are many extraordinary locations where parkways could be constructed. The Adirondack region of upstate New York, for example. What a tragedy if we abandon this art form or settle for poor imitations.

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# Stanley Abbott and the Design of the Blue Ridge Parkway

by  
*Leslie Gignoux*

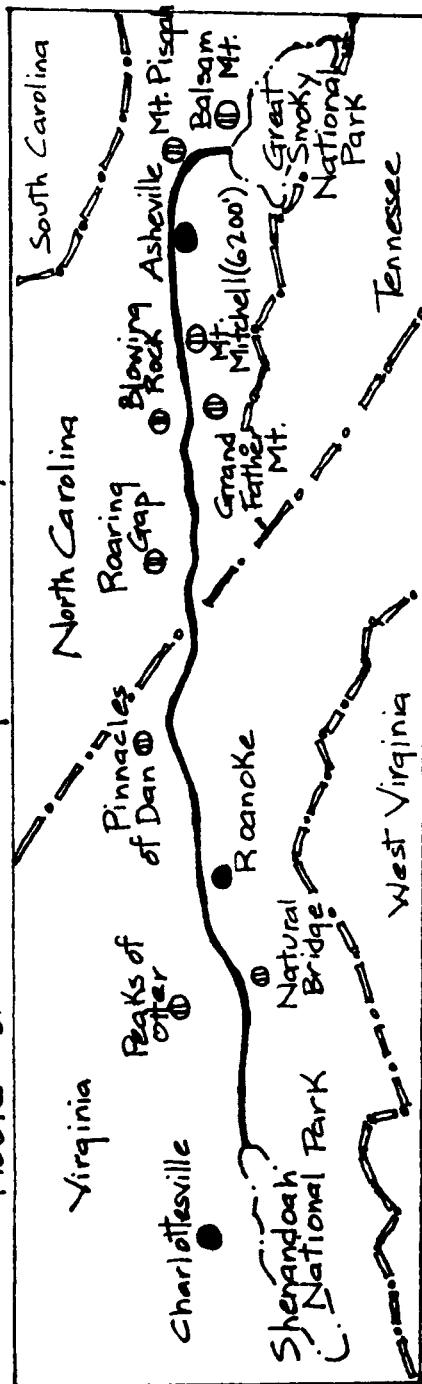
“The grace of the road is in the way it weaves into the mountains.” (Stanley W. Abbott).<sup>1</sup>

The Shenandoah — Great Smoky Mountain National Parkway is viewed by many as one of the most important public improvements to further the growth of Southwestern Virginia since the railroad.<sup>2</sup> Stanley Abbott is indeed a national hero as is Frederick Law Olmsted (Central Park, Prospect Park, the Fens). Abbott was a pioneer in Parkway design. He ventured the concept of a “scenic parkway” which in essence was composed of an elongated park through which a road travelled.<sup>3</sup> Abbott’s design for the Blue Ridge Parkway established a legacy in Parkway design which has received international recognition. Yet Abbott, the designer, has remained virtually unrecognized amidst the Parkway’s acclaim.

In December 1933, Stanley Abbott was appointed resident Landscape Architect for the National Park Service, and in 1937 he was named acting superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway. When Abbott retired from the Park Service in 1965, he had dedicated 32 years of service to designing and maintaining parks and recreational areas. His projects were numerous and far-reaching; Finger Lakes State Park in Ithaca (1930), Westchester County Parks and Parkways (1931), Mississippi River Parkway (1950) and Cascades National Park in Washington. The formula applied to the Parkway allowed a width of 1,000 feet for park purposes, or 100 acres per mile. The width used for the Westchester County Parks and Parkways was 250 feet, this was an inadequate width for views and scenic areas along the Blue Ridge Parkway.<sup>4</sup> The influence which the Westchester County Parkway exerted on the Blue Ridge Parkway can’t be underestimated, for it was one of the principle guideposts in the design for the Blue Ridge project, and it provided an example for Abbott to use as a reference.

Abbott proved to be a Landscape Architect possessing enormous dedication. The Blue Ridge Parkway is perhaps his finest accomplishment, “it is a road of unlimited horizons.”<sup>5</sup> Today, the Parkway boasts a wider variety of native wildflowers than can be found in all of Europe. The Parkway has also had a profound economic impact on the livelihoods of the people of this region. Olmsted once wrote, “I love beautiful landscapes and rural recreations and people in rural recreations better than anybody else I know.”<sup>6</sup> Abbott shared this viewpoint and he incorporated the “elongated park” design concept which offered views and scenic vistas much like the great English

## Route of Blue Ridge Parkway



Average elevation - 2500'

90  
scale  
N

### Legend :

- ① Wayside Park
- ② Major City
- State Boundary
- National Park
- Parkway

landscape gardeners had achieved, and as Olmsted achieved with Prospect Park in Brooklyn.

As a graduate of Cornell University (1929) and a former captain of the Cornell crew team, Abbott held a degree in Landscape Architecture. He also realized his lack of marketability with such a degree. Abbott considered himself an Environmental Planner instead. Earlier, Abbott had established a deep interest in the parkway concept. Abbott's idea has been compared with that of the European Landscape Architect, Prince Von Muskau, who advised that the activities of humans are a fully natural part of any total landscape.<sup>7</sup> Abbott went a step beyond Muskau. He supplied data and referred to statistics which showed clear patterns in the rise of tourism and auto travel within the U.S., and he pointed to an increase in the number of vacationers at resorts in county, state and national parks. "We have seen statements by leaders in the motor industry anticipating a record sale of motor cars during 1937."<sup>8</sup> Abbott cited trends towards shorter working hours and longer vacation periods (time which involved the use of the automobile). Tourists could potentially increase the growth of the auto industry. Abbott also addressed the inadequacies of the present highway system. He cited a rise in construction costs and auto accidents due to "ordinary highways."

In his Blue Ridge Parkway treatise, Abbott fostered this new notion of the vacationer. The Parkway was a reasonably new solution to the traffic issue and the most important feature of the Parkway was that it did not resemble the ordinary highway. "The Blue Ridge Parkway is a pioneer among parkway types. In this project, the national government, in cooperation with the states, seeks to meet on a broad scale of interstate planning the ever-increasing demands of the vacation tourist. In the broadest sense, it is to be a drive for recreation—for the leisurely motorist who may spend days or even weeks, vacationing along its 500 miles."<sup>9</sup> The Parkway was not built for high speed driving like the German autobahn, nor was the Parkway designed to be purely a scenic highway connecting two national parks. The Parkway was intended to encompass the scenic as well as the recreational element.

Abbott's vision for the Parkway was: "from air, a ribbon of concrete in a continuous broader ribbon of lovely unbroken green. The idea of the Landscape Architects is to fit the Parkway into the mountains as if nature had put it there."<sup>10</sup> To enhance the natural beauty of the Parkway, the Landscape Architects worked to rehabilitate areas marred by Parkway construction. Abbott foresaw the addition of small parks and playgrounds to accommodate the vacationer. The many different types of recreational areas along the Parkway would stimulate added interest for those who fish, hike, swim, ride horses, enjoy botany or for the nature lover. The Parkway in Abbott's eyes was "a unique wonderland in this part of the world." Abbott became a regional expert and through his capacity to conduct frequent on-site analyses, he was invaluable to the Parkway's progress. "I can't imagine a more

creative job than locating the Blue Ridge Parkway, because you worked with a 10-league canvas and a brush of comet's tail. Moss and lichens collected on the shake roof of a Mabry Mill measured against huge panoramas that look out forever.”<sup>12</sup>

The national significance of the Parkway in 1937 had reached the attention of the general public. Nineteen wayside parks with approximately 50,000 accompanying acres were originally planned for the elongated park along the Blue Ridge. At this time, only seven of the nineteen parks exist along the 500 mile stretch of Parkway. Abbott planned one park per 25 miles. The Roanoke area in particular was near four of the finest mountain parks; the Peaks of Otter, Rocky Knob, Pine Spur, and Smart View. “All the parks are going to add to the fact that the “scenic” will be a new kind of recreation unit—giving the effect of driving through a park for 500 miles.”<sup>13</sup>

Political battles ensued during the construction of the Parkway. Repeatedly, the project suffered financial setbacks. Original Parkway construction estimates had been set at an average of \$70,000 per mile.<sup>14</sup> The Hayden-Cartwright Bill (1936) authorized \$20 million to be used towards the construction of national parkways. In the early days of Parkway legislation, Senator Harry F. Byrd (D.Va.) was a strong supporter of the Blue Ridge project. The jurisdictional problems which arose between the Interior Department and the Department of Agriculture and Forest Service called for the political expertise of Senator Byrd.

Under the Hayden-Cartwright Roads Bill, the Blue Ridge project was appropriated \$5.7 million for 1938 and \$5.1 million for 1939. Another significant project being carried out at the same time was Natchez Trace. Natchez Trace received roughly the same appropriations as the Blue Ridge project. In 1937, the Parkway suffered its first bout from the government's purse. The House Appropriations Committee cut the Blue Ridge Parkway budget from \$5 million to \$2.5 million. Immediately, a State representative fought for increased appropriations. As a result the project received \$4.5 million. This incident illustrated one of the many long political and financial battles which the Parkway was propelled into.

In addition to the issues created with construction costs, other political setbacks occurred. The first involved the resettlement of the Cherokee Indian reservation, and the second opposition force came from the Wilderness Society which protested the encroachment of a super roadway. The Cherokee Indian reservation rested near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and it fell along the projected route of the Parkway. As a result, the Parkway Commission proposed the Weaver Bill which offered the Indians a fair trade of land and money for their territory. The resettlement area would be fertile and tillable. The Wilderness Society was a privately funded civic action group possessing the power to sway popular opinion. Between these two forces the struggle to obtain an ample “right-of-way,” political battles in general delayed construction of the Parkway. The elimination of Tennessee from the Parkway

route caused federal and state trouble as well. With the advent of World War II, construction was halted from 1942-44. Abbott served in the military from 1942-44, and he did not return to the Blue Ridge project after completing his duty; however, Abbott did stay with the Park Service.

The total development of the Blue Ridge Parkway has spanned nearly 50 years. Construction began in 1935 and was completed (with the exception of the Linn Cove Viaduct) in 1969. The Viaduct has been called the "missing link" of the Parkway.<sup>15</sup> Abbott approached the Parkway's completion with a learned and well-seasoned intellect. He always perceived its national significance. Indeed, Abbott's first design for the parkway was drafted on the dining room table at his Salem, Virginia home.

Since its inception, the Parkway was distinguished by three elements new to the parkway system in general:

1. Enough park width to enable a buffer zone on either side of the roadway, allowing for increased roadside beautification.
2. Elimination of major road crossings through the installation of bridges and infrequent spacing of access roads in order to minimize conflict with major auto routes.
3. Roadway will follow a path effecting the most scenic diversity in this region of the U.S.<sup>16</sup>

Of these three principles, the broad roadside strip was considered the most important. This type of control would limit "parasitic and unsightly border development"<sup>17</sup> (i.e., hot dog stands and billboards). The Parkway and its structures were intended to characterize simplicity so that a harmony could be achieved with the natural environment. Various measures were taken to procure a scenic parkway. Regional differences of topography and native plant materials were important to the process, as was the safety and ease of the grade of the road. It was a parkway for the leisurely motorist. "By warping of the roadside grading into the existing contour of the ground it is hoped to soften the evidence of machine construction."<sup>18</sup>

Wayside recreational activities were highly important to the success of the Parkway. Wayside parks were not a mere additive, they were a most important part of the formula for conservation along the Parkway. They are "like beads on a string; the rare gems in the necklace."<sup>19</sup> Through successful and time-consuming Federal land programs, the National Park Service acquired scenic pieces of land for the "intimate appreciation of nature."<sup>20</sup> The acquisition of this land was a hindrance in the construction of the Parkway, since the land was usually owned by private individuals. Thus, maximum protective measures had to be adopted for the preservation of the natural environment. Scenic easements and the issue of land rights evolved into a policy whereby individual land rights could be retained if the land was to be used for agricultural or residential purposes. The term "right of way" evolved from the "elongated park" concept, and it was frequently used by the Park Service during the land rights negotiations.

In conclusion, the Blue Ridge Parkway attributes credit to many different participants who at various stages assisted in bringing about one of the finest examples of a Parkway to be found on the East Coast. Yet, Abbott has escaped the notice of the general public. Instead, political figures have occupied the limelight. Though the value of political friends was crucial to the opening of the Parkway, the designer must be applauded for his great contribution to enhancing the aesthetic beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains while bringing in people and automobiles and allowing them to participate in a natural environment. Abbott's complete familiarity with the Blue Ridge region assisted him greatly. One of the principle influences upon the Parkway was the Westchester County Parks and Parkways project. Abbott's training on the Westchester project certainly influenced his notion of the Parkway. Abbott dedicated himself to the completion of the Blue Ridge Parkway and his national reputation has only just begun to be realized. Abbott maintained a clear concept of the "Parkway" throughout his public career with the Park Service. Certainly, the Blue Ridge Parkway would not be what it is today without wayside parks or broad right-of-ways. As Olmstead envisioned his "emerald necklace" of green parks for the people in his Boston Park system, likewise Abbott envisioned a sequence of wayside parks along a parkway for the vacationer. Olmstead observed Birkenhead Park in England and made an astute judgement which in due respects, Abbott must have also believed.

"All this magnificent pleasure-ground is entirely, unreservedly, and forever the people's own."<sup>21</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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3. Oral Interview. p.i.
4. Oral Interview, p.22
5. Jolley, p. 4.
6. Zaitzevsky, p. 30.
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13. "Nineteen Wayside Parks Along Scenic Route Planned," June 1937.
14. "Millions More Given Parkway." June 1936. Roanoke Times.
15. "Engineers Rewrote Book for Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge." Feb. 1985.
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# Stanley Abbott and the Design of The Blue Ridge Parkway

by  
*Douglas Swaim*

I would like to begin with a brief review of the early history of the Parkway in order to set the context for its design.

On November 18, 1933, Secretary of Interior Ickes informed the director of the National Park Service that President Roosevelt had approved the proposed park to park scenic highway. Then, on December 19, 1933, \$4 million was appropriated by the Public Works Administration for building the road, which was officially designated a "parkway."

It is apparent that few, if any, of the top officials involved appreciated the full implication of their expressed intention to build not an ordinary road, but a parkway. There is no doubt that some of the state officials thought of it as simply another road. There is no doubt, as well, that the residents of the rural areas through which the road was to pass envisioned it as a glorified farm-to-market highway. An illustration of this lack of understanding of what the project entailed: at one of the hearings held in Baltimore and Washington in 1934 to consider the Parkway route south of Blowing Rock, there was some discussion of width of right-of-way and a figure of 200 feet was mentioned. The Parkway's young Resident Architect Stan Abbott protested that 200 feet was insufficient, but to no avail at that time. Over the following years one can track his success in conveying the notion of parkway in the successive jacking up of the standard for the road's right-of-way.

Stan Abbott reported to work on December 27, 1933—just a week after the Public Works Administration had appropriated the first \$4 million for construction. All indications are that Abbott was given practically a blank check to design the Parkway. He immediately began to reconnoiter along the proposed routes. The route south from the Skyline Drive to Blowing Rock was pretty well settled by the summer of 1934. Secretary Ickes made his decision for the North Carolina route south of there on November 10, 1934.

Parkway historian Harley Jolley supports Ickes public reasoning that Tennessee had already benefitted from millions in TVA projects. I—being a loyal North Carolinian—wonder whether the decision was prompted in part at least by the reports Stan Abbott must have been bringing in about the spectacular scenery 50 miles north and south of Asheville. At any rate Abbott was basically handed the general route and told, "There—design and build a parkway."

Now we're getting into the design of the Parkway proper and in just



1. Stann Abbott investigating stone masonry precedents in southwestern Virginia in the spring of 1935.

a minute I want to set out the design principles that guided the process, but first let's quickly review the division of responsibilities among the various agencies sharing the task of getting the Parkway designed and built:

Again, the Secretary's decision to follow the crest of the Blue Ridge was a general guide only. The first step in locating the Parkway was field reconnaissance. In Virginia, Hendrik Van Gelder was in charge of reconnaissance, and in North Carolina, Edward Abbuehl. (By the way, these two landscape architects, along with Abbott, comprised the sole Parkway staff throughout 1934.) I should mention that the task of reconnaissance was made all the more challenging by a lack of maps for some sections.

The government technicians would reconnoiter a long section, 50 to 100 miles, and establish major control points, generally mountain gaps where the road was certain to fall, and from these work down to lesser control points—and then finally establish a tentative location and flag the whole route.

This flagged route was reviewed by both the Parkway's landscape architects and the engineers with the Bureau of Public Roads and, if approved, the state would be authorized to proceed with topographic surveys that covered a strip two to several hundred feet wide following the flagged line.

The state's topographic survey produced the detailed base maps upon which the Federal people would lay out the road. Once the topo maps had been produced the engineers of the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) in collaboration with the landscape architects would design the roadway itself.

Once a center line had been located and right of way requirements established, it was back in the hands of states whose responsibility it was to acquire the right of way. At the same time the BPR engineers in collaboration with the National Park Service landscape architects prepared the final design for the road.

Once plans were complete, the Bureau of Public Roads put the project out for bids from private contractors. Once a bid was accepted, construction could begin. Work in progress was inspected both by the federal engineers and landscape architects. Once accepted, a section of road would be turned over to National Park Service for maintenance and administration.

Although a team effort—or rather a collaborative effort among a diverse group of individuals and agencies, all of whom were pioneering in the sense of doing something not done before—it fell to Stan Abbott to coordinate and arbitrate throughout the process.

## Principles

It was also up to Abbott to establish the principles that would guide the design of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Of course he did not do this in a vacuum. He drew from his experience working with the Westchester Parks Commission; he benefitted greatly from the example of the Skyline Drive that had been built in the Shenandoah

Park and to which his parkway would connect (although it is important to note he deliberately chose to design the Blue Ridge Parkway differently); and he benefitted from the counsel of the supervising landscape architects, most notably from Edward H. Abbuehl, who was eventually assigned the task of master planning for the Parkway.

Abbott's basic premise for the Parkway was this, that—in his words—it “has but one reason for existence, which is to please by revealing the charm and interest of the native American countryside.”

In support of this overarching standard, Abbott and his colleagues developed a number of principles that would guide the design and future operation of the Parkway. These principles show up clearly in the documents that survive that set out Abbott's vision. I might mention what those are: first, Abbott's requisite boilerplate speech he gave to civic clubs in western Virginia and western North Carolina in the 1930s, several key inter-agency memos he wrote during the 1930s and 40s, his correspondence and reports, and importantly, a wonderful oral history interview that was recorded by fellow Park Service employee Herbert Evison in the early 1960s.

I boil these principles down to 8, although there's certainly nothing sacred about my organization of it—Abbott never organized his vision in this way—and someone else looking at the material might come up with a few points more, or less, to make.

1) The first principle, and in Abbott's words, the “most important,” was that the roadway would travel through a broad, protected right of way that would allow for the preservation and restoration of an unspoiled roadside landscape. The ideal that the Parkway designers set for themselves was that the horizon would be the boundary—in other words, that there would be nothing in view from the Parkway *for as far as the eye could see* that would displease the traveler.

2) Second—here entirely in Abbott's words—“In its design the parkway and its structures will be characterized by simplicity and informality in order that they may harmonize with the natural environment.” This principle had implications for the design of all elements of the Parkway, from the roadway itself down to the guardrails, signs, and waterfountains. Where the roadway was concerned, it implied a light-touch, sculptural approach to locating the centerline. In Abbott's words, “Having selected a route for the road, you design a road that fits the topography sympathetically. That takes, well, almost a form of sculpture—a third dimensional insight into what is the main contour of this particular land—whether on broad curve, or, sometimes (since nature doesn't always deplore a straight line) places where the road wanted to straighten out because the land straightened out.”

3) Principle #2 speaks to how the Parkway relates to its environment—sympathetically and harmoniously; principle #3 speaks to how all the elements of the Parkway relate to each other. In short, they must all support one another and contribute to the unified, total experience. Again in Abbott's

words, "Any piece of writing that aspires to be a work of art must carry its justification in every line. A good oil painting or a musical work can't have its dead areas, its neglected detail. All elements must compose, so as to please." And I must add that I think it's highly indicative of Abbott's approach that he would compare the Parkway with a work of art. Of course for him it was a work of art.

4) The fourth principle I see at work in the design of the Blue Ridge Parkway is Abbott's dictum: "Variety is the spice of the parkway." Here is a point on which Abbott diverged from the design concept behind the Skyline Drive. Whereas the designers of the Skyline Drive placed their scenic highway on the crest of the mountains throughout practically its entire length, Abbott took Secretary Ickes directive to follow the crest of the Blue Ridge as a general guideline only. Even awesome panoramas can get tedious, he felt. One could be "gorged on scenery." Showing great wisdom, or at any rate a keen understanding of human behavior and perception, Abbott and his engineers, and again I quote, "just drilled and drilled all of us, on the business of following a mountain stream for awhile, then climbing up on the slope of a hill pasture, then dipping down into the open bottom lands and back into the woodlands." He could have added to that, I believe, rounding a sunlit curve and diving into a pitch-dark, cool and damp tunnel—which I think is one of the most pleasing contrasts in the experience of driving on the Parkway.

Stan Abbott was fond of quoting Emily Dickenson's poem about a train moving through the mountains as a referent for this notion of variety: "I love to see it lap the miles and lick the valleys up, and chase itself around a pile of mountains, and then stop, docile and omnipotent, at its own stable door."

5) A fifth principle speaks to a slightly more mundane issue, that of the ease and safety of travel on the Parkway. If the motorist is to devote a large share of his or her attention to the appreciation of the unfolding scenery, then, for safety's sake, the road itself had better not present the driver with too many surprises. This was accomplished by maintaining a higher standard of grade and curvature than was common on most roads of the day.

Principle #6. When Abbott said the Parkway's reason for being was "to reveal the charm and interest of the native American countryside," there was implicit in that statement and understanding that the landscape through which it passed, although naturally beautiful, was not wild—it was long lived in. Again, in contrast to the Skyline Drive where all native structures were obliterated, the designers of the Blue Ridge Parkway accepted a responsibility to preserve and interpret the cultural history of the roadside landscape. In Abbott's words, "Through much of its length the parkway goes through a 'managed' landscape and I think it has been pretty clear and relatively unquestioned within the (Park) Service that the problem was to marry ourselves to that managed landscape. This has required a feeling for

the rail fence, the old barn, and the farm field." And elsewhere he said, "The picture of...simple homestead culture...is as interesting a part of the Blue Ridge as the natural scene around (it)."

7) Principle #6—preserve and interpret the man-made roadside landscape—leads to principle #7, the need to continue to manage that landscape. Or, Abbott quoting Rudyard Kipling this time, "Once you tamper with nature, you had better keep it up." This need for continued development and management of the roadside landscape applied both to the landscape that the Park Service *inherited* from the highland farmers and to the landscape they *created* by building a road through farmland and forest. Quoting supervising landscape architect Ed Abbuehl, "Some of the homesteads and farms are very picturesque and charming, but there are other places where the imprint of man has been brutal to say the least." The land was scarred by logging, soil erosion, forest fires. And then there was the new scar of the Parkway itself. Quoting Abbuehl again, "From the very beginning the landscape architects were most conscious of the scar the parkway would create, in studying its location. In only too many places about all that could be done was to hope for the best, knowing that the big fills and cuts were bound to scar the landscape." Principle #7 led to a landscape management program that sought to heal both the Park Service's inherited and self-created environmental wounds.

8) Principle #8—the last on my list—held that due to the recreational purpose of this elongated park, and due to the desire to control and protect the total environment experienced by the traveler, it was desirable and necessary to acquire and develop at intervals wayside recreation parks. Wayside parks were another means of literally broadening the experience beyond the narrow mountaintop corridor. According to Stan Abbott they were "a most important part of the formula." They were "like beads on a string—the rare gems in the necklace." They allowed whole scenic "pictures" to be preserved and provided Parkway travelers with places to stop for a refreshing hike, a picnic, or overnight lodging.

It was the application of these principles in addressing countless design situations that produced the overall design of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Let's quickly review the eight:

- 1) The Parkway traversed a protected corridor—and inasmuch as it was possible, the horizon was the boundary;
- 2) The Parkway and all of its associated structures were to be characterized by simplicity and informality in order to harmonize with the natural environment;
- 3) All elements must compose;
- 4) Variety is the spice of the parkway;
- 5) Driving the road should be easy and, hence, safe;
- 6) The road should be married with the cultural landscape through which it passes as well as with the natural landscape;

7) The roadside landscape should be managed to heal the scars caused by man's use and by the construction of the Parkway; and

8) Wayside parks will broaden the experience by taking in whole scenic "pictures"—they will be the gems in the necklace.

These design principles reflect Stan Abbott's idealized image of the Parkway—the compelling vision of the Parkway which he was able to project above the cacophony of two federal agencies, two states, and all their descending functionaries attempting to collaborate on a project of unprecedented scale and quality. I feel certain it was due in part to the clarity of that vision that the project held together in its rocky, formative years. What's more, the vision has guided three whole generations of Parkway builders.

## Application of Principles

What I would like to do next is demonstrate how the vision met reality to produce the Parkway we know. I don't have time, nor has my research been thorough enough, to do this in an exhaustive way. Rather, I will take samples from the available evidence to show how the Parkway was designed. I shall begin back with the grosser aspects of design—the placement of the road in the landscape—and work toward decisions affecting the design of details such as signage and guardrails.

And here it would seem appropriate to introduce a major hypothesis about the process that produced the Parkway: that the task was approached in an experimental, somewhat trial-and-error sort of way—that the designers had no qualms about testing one means of solving a problem and later deciding that their initial product was inadequate and in need of refinement. This trial-and-error approach will be seen time and again in the succeeding examples.

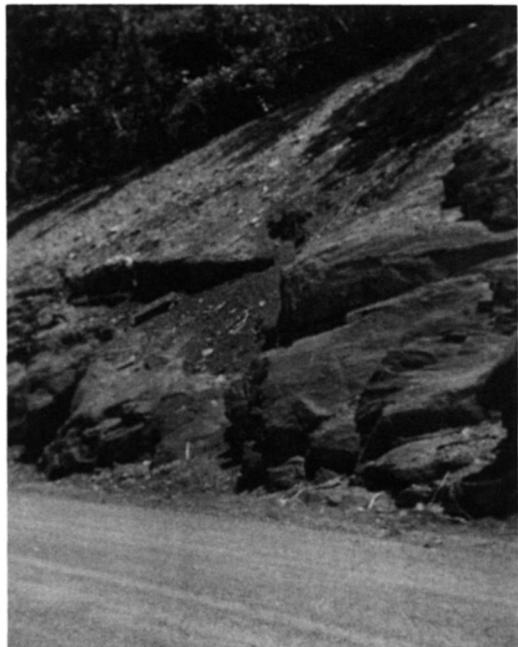
Upon reflection, this approach seems appropriate—perhaps even necessary—for an undertaking such as this which had no precedent. In Abbott's own words writing in a 1943 memo, "It is no simple matter to define irrevocably what a national parkway should be. We have no precedent so far as I know in the world."

Let us move on to the reality of designing the Parkway:

1) First let's consider the placement of the road. Where would you put your Parkway? How would you make your decision? From Ed Abbuehl we learn that, and I quote, "There are many factors that must be taken into consideration in making a location for a parkway, such as the usual engineering problem of cost, alignment, grades, maintenance, and direction, and the landscape features of scenic views, right-of-way, topography, variety of type of country such as a ridge location vs. a valley. More often than not many of these considerations would be in direct opposition to each other as a cheap right-of-way generally meant rough terrain and increased construction costs,



A roadside slope before grading called for in development plans.



The same slope after grading. Rocks have been exposed and cleaned up, opportunity for future erosion reduced.

or nice level land for easy construction would invariably mean higher right-of-way costs to be paid by the state. It was early decided that there would be many 'views' on almost any location so that a location to seek a view in itself was simply one factor and not the only one in the determination."

We can also learn something of the terms of the discussion by reading some of the reconnaissance reports sent in from the field in 1934 and 1935. From Virginia, landscape architect Van Gelder reports on a tentative route flagged by the engineers of the Blue Ridge Parkway: "Station 125-143—road swings far to right, through orchard behind farmhouse, and then midway up a hillside through very steep plowed fields, where grading would be almost impossible (see picture). Suggest instead that drive keep to left, close to highway and follow along lower edge of plowed fields. Grades to be adjusted as close to natural as possible. This would also straighten line and do least damage to the farm."

Here we find several of the guiding principles at work.

2) Second, let's consider for a moment the reality of attempting to protect a view that extended to the horizon. You will recall that Stan Abbott objected to a narrow 200' right-of-way at one of the route hearings in 1934. His objection fell on deaf ears at the time. The concept of the Parkway was still too new. As location crews began their surveys out in the field, however, they quickly found that a right-of-way boundary 100' off the center line would not even circumscribe the larger cuts and fills, much less the views.

In February 1935 the Blue Ridge Parkway agreed to a proposal by Abbott that the fee simple right-of-way should average 100 acres per mile with an additional 50 acres protected by scenic easements. This would translate to a right-of-way approximately 825 feet wide in fee simple with an additional 400 feet in scenic easement. North Carolina accepted the proposal at once and even bumped the fee simple figures from 120 to 125 acres. Virginia offered a compromise whereby it would acquire 400 feet of scenic easement on either side of the 200 foot fee simple right-of-way. The farmers of southwest Virginia proved as reluctant to encumber their property with easements as they were to sell outright, however, and so after awhile Virginia settled on the following formula for outright acquisition: an 800 foot strip through wooded land, a 600 foot strip through poor farmland, and a 400 foot strip through good farmland.

Property acquisition and easements helped to extend the Park Service's control. An agricultural lease-back program helped to blur the boundary between private land and Parkway land. Under the program, farmers with lands adjacent to the Parkway could lease Park Service land for growing crops or grazing. The arrangement brought "the cow, or winter wheat, or the corn up to the fence at the edge of the road," and helped to win friends and allies in the process.

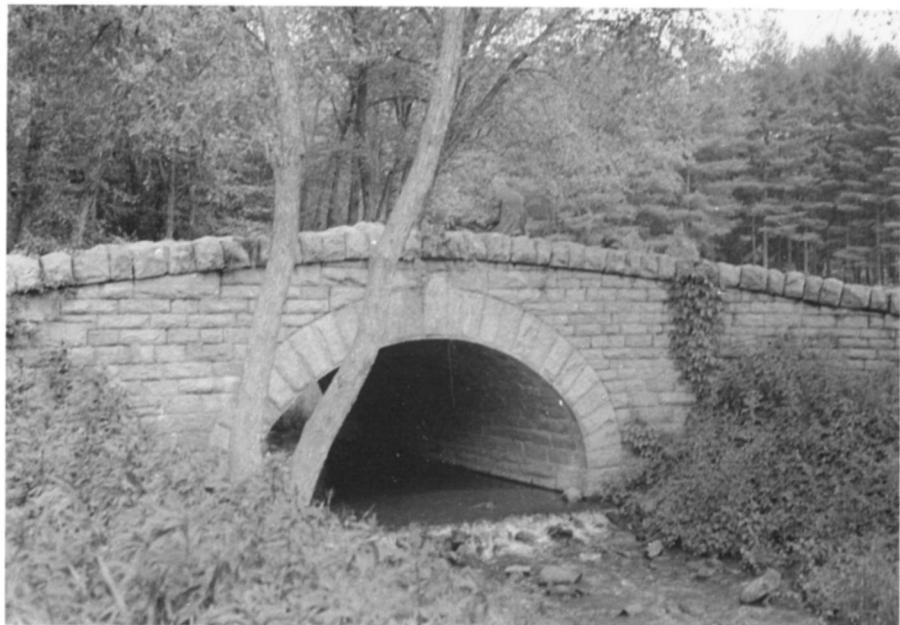
3) This next aspect of designing the Parkway is easy to overlook because it has been so successful. We'll call it landscaping the right-of-way. From a



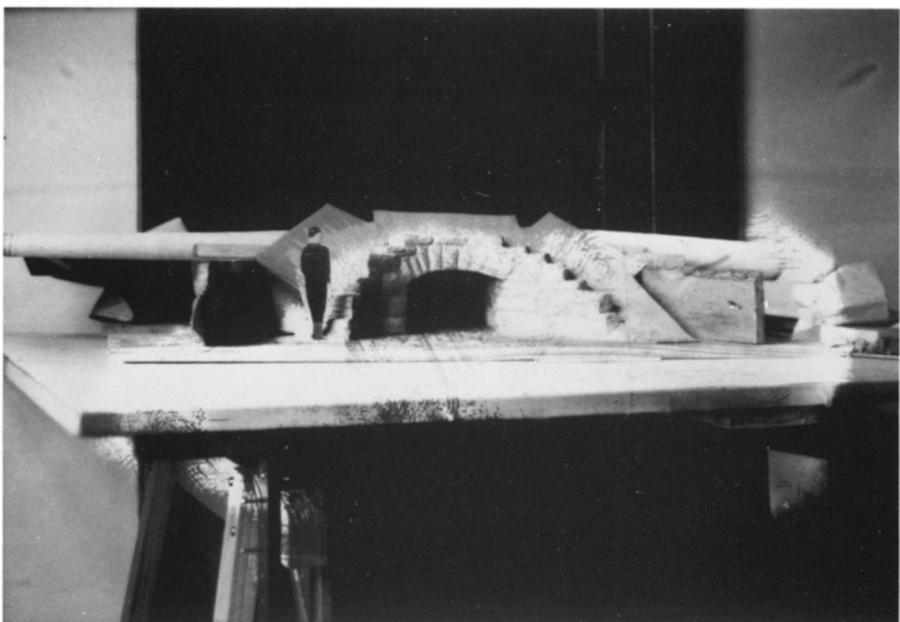
Seeding and staked mulch in Bluff Park (later Doughton Park), 1941. Landscape development sought to heal roadside scars, including bringing the grass up to the pavement.



Design for a model Parkway gas station, recalling Appalachian traditional architecture.



Abbuehl and Abbott visited the Biltmore Estate in Asheville in May of 1935 and photographed this stone masonry bridge.



Clay model of the Parkway's standard stone single culvert, photographed in the spring of 1935.

report compiled by Ed Abbuehl in 1948 we learn that: "In 1937 Landscape Architect Malcolm Bird undertook the organization of a landscape program and started preparation of landscape development plans. It has been the policy to keep this program to the most essential needs. Attention is first given to stabilization of the cuts and fills which may require further flattening before they can be seeded or planted, clean up and selective cutting of the adjacent woods, vista cutting, clearing, liming and fertilizing the open fields, and finally planting of trees and shrubs to help blend the motor road into its environs."

A major round of regrading was begun in 1948-49 to alleviate maintenance problems caused by steep slopes left after early Parkway construction work. This increased landscaping activity seemed to coincide with Abbuehl taking over as Resident Landscape Architect and with resumption of work after World War II.

4) Let's turn next to the design of the buildings along the Parkway. Stan Abbott set out his concepts of a fitting architectural style for Parkway buildings in a 1943 inter-office memo. In it he says: "This office feels that on the Blue Ridge Parkway we have made a start toward developing a unique and very fitting architectural style in the public buildings which have been constructed and in the plans which have been projected. It is simply an adaptation of the general forms, lines, and materials of the local sheds, barns, and dwellings which adapt remarkably well to Parkway needs. This office feels that the recall of pioneer building methods in the Parkway structures is one of the principal opportunities that we have to preserve something of the backwoods feeling that otherwise may disappear from the mountains....It is not true to say that public buildings with the local character should be made a feature of the Parkway. It is correct to say that since they will be part of a somewhat managed roadside that they may add a harmonious note of the pioneer architecture. Therefore, they do differ in kind from the architecture of many national park buildings where the whole and proper purpose is to make them as inconspicuous as possible."

5) Bridges/Tunnels/Culverts

6) Signs/Guardrails/Fountains

(Author's note: Items #5 and #6 above were treated exclusively through illustrations during the conference presentation. In the case of #5, Bridges/Tunnels/Culverts, the chief points were: the Parkway designers looked to CCC bridges, a stone bridge on the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, and the Westchester County parkway system bridges for their models; that they examined various examples of native stonework before deciding on that used on the Parkway; that they showed an extra-ordinary attention to detail in the design and construction of these structures, to the point of constructing scale models of clay in the Roanoke offices; and, finally, that much of the effort that went into bridges and culverts is lost on the average Parkway traveler as these structures are seldom a part of the Parkway scenery—example:



8. Evolution of the standard Parkway entrance sign:

- (a) 1939 version
- (b) 1948 version, redesigned for symmetry
- (c) 1949 version, redesigned again for better viewing from roadway

the triple-span Linville River bridge. In the case of #6, Signs/Guardrails/Fountains, the chief point was that, over time, the Parkway designers approached the design of these elements experimentally, trying one means and then another to solve the functional problems while attempting to blend the architecture into the natural and scenic landscape.]

I would like to close with one more quote from Stan Abbott, another example of his eloquence in describing the task that he was about. The quote also underscores the point, mentioned earlier, that his approach went beyond design, as we often conceive of it, into the realm of art. Stan Abbott said, "I can't imagine a more creative job than locating the Blue Ridge Parkway, because you worked with a ten league canvas and a brush of comet's tail. Moss and lichens collecting on the shake roof of a Mabry Mill measure against huge panoramas that look out forever."

And if that doesn't send chills up your spine, nothing will.

# The Blue Ridge Parkway: A Catalyst for Environmental Design Innovation

by  
*John W. Bright*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The title of this conference, "The Blue Ridge Parkway: Agent of Transition" is particularly appropriate to the topic of this paper, for the parkway has been truly an agent for change and innovation in design of parkways and park roads. While the Blue Ridge Parkway (BLRI) was not the first parkway and has borrowed much of its technology from its predecessors, it expanded considerably on and contributed to this technology. Moreover, the Blue Ridge Parkway was a major catalyst influencing significant changes in land use, economics, conservation, and tourism along its 470-mile corridor.

Since these spin-off influences are very adequately treated by other speakers at this conference, this paper will concentrate on those technologies of parkway design which were perfected on the Blue Ridge Parkway, plus those which originated here, and those design influences which now transcend the park and parkway field.

I would submit that it was largely through these design innovations and practices that the Blue Ridge Parkway was, some years ago, designated America's most scenic road. For other roads traverse the same terrain and still other roads traverse even more spectacular countryside.

### 1.1 History of Parkway Development

America's first parkway, paralleling the Bronx River in New York, had an auspicious origin—that of obviating trash dumps and land fills. Interestingly, this parkway, completed in the Model-T era of 1924, embodied some very advanced concepts, some only recently coming into vogue. First, it was conceived as a linear park to protect a resource value, not just a roadway to service traffic. Second, although not finally constructed in this manner, it was proposed as two one-way, separated roadways, each on separate alignment. Third, since this facility was in reality a park, the roadway served the park, thus excluding frequent access and commercial traffic. And fourth, the Bronx River Parkway set the stage for curvilinear alignment, sculptured grading, and preservation of roadside values.

This parkway connects the parks of northern New York City with the city's reservoirs in nearby Westchester County, and proved the progenitor

of the noteworthy Westchester County Parkway System. But this system, though adopting the design concepts of its mentor, differed in basic purpose. It was conceived to serve as commuter network.

In 1932, the first National Parkway was opened, connecting Washington, D.C. to our first President's home at Mount Vernon. Interestingly, this parkway enjoyed some of the traits of all its predecessors—it followed the sinuous course of a river through an elongated park, it connected two key attractions, and served commuter needs.

Thus parkways started as linear parks treaded by a pleasantly drivable and pleasingly designed motor road linking the city to the suburbs or to suburban objectives.

## 1.2 Blue Ridge Parkway In A Historical Context

The Blue Ridge Parkway originated neither as an environmental project nor as scenic connector route, but, as the late Senator Harry F. Byrd declared, to make work and to promote tourism.

Initial emergency relief funds were allocated in 1933, and, as we know, construction started in 1935. Congressional authorization for National Park Service (NPS) administration did not come until the following year. Rapid progress was made until interrupted by World War II, following which momentum was resumed. Now, this week, we can all see work underway to close the last gap at Grandfather Mountain. The contract for final paving and finish work on this section is scheduled for 1986, with completion in 1987.

During these last 50 years we have seen pleasure driving boom as an almost inherent human right. The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission's (ORRRC) report of about 25 years ago found driving for pleasure America's number one outdoor recreation activity. More recently, the gas crunch of 1973 and increasing interest in active, participatory recreation activities diminished the popularity of such driving.

Interestingly, this decline was not experienced on the Blue Ridge Parkway. In fact, public use continues to increase year after year. To explain this enigma, one has to realize that the Blue Ridge Parkway is much more than a driving experience; it's really a total park experience.

## 1.3 A Complete Park-Way

In this historical context, the Blue Ridge Parkway has developed as a complete "park way," not simply a commuter route or an urban connector. It is truly a linear park threaded by a roadway, in which the linear park is the objective, rather than its termini.

The Blue Ridge Parkway epitomizes the ideal in other ways. Commercial traffic is excluded providing an opportunity for lower geometric standards, less costly structural sections, and safer driving conditions that result

from lack of mixed traffic.

Its ground-hugging geometry exemplifies another characteristic of the complete parkway. Nowhere has this criterion been more successfully applied, perhaps born of necessity in such tortuous terrain. Long after this parkway standard was established the National Park Service embodied this principle in its policies for all park roads, saying

“A park road lays lightly on the ground and strives to maintain a sense of intimacy with the country through which it is passing”

These policies furthermore extend parkway location and geometric standards to all park roads by declaring that

“...No road should be designed simply as a connecting device to link together points of interest. Every segment should relate to the environment through which it passes in a meaningful way; and should, to the extent possible, constitute an enjoyable and informative experience in itself.”

Going back even further into the policies of the National Park Service, its first Director, Stephen Mather, declared in 1924 that

“Particular attention... will be given to laying out the roads...so that they will disturb as little as possible the vegetation, forests, and rocky hillsides through which they are built...”

## **2. The Blue Ridge Parkway Perfects Borrowed and Transferred Technology**

Initial work on the Blue Ridge Parkway leaned heavily on borrowed technology, especially from the Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park and from the designers of the Westchester County System. In fact, some of the same people were involved. Stanley Abbott, landscape architectural genius behind the Blue Ridge Parkway was recruited from Westchester County.

### **2.1 Union of Civil Engineering and Landscape Architectural Skills**

One of the ingredients of successful parkway development thus borrowed was the idea of a location and design team composed of civil engineers and landscape architects. From that very first parkway along the Bronx River, this complementary mix proved critical. In the case of the Skyline Drive, this mix was assured through the joint efforts of landscape architects of the National Park Service and engineers of the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR),

the predecessor agency to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Interestingly, this particular bi-agency team concept, starting in 1930 on the Skyline Drive, and extending to the Blue Ridge Parkway a few years later, is still functioning. But the Blue Ridge Parkway extended the team concept to include other disciplines as well. Natural and social scientists became important members to assist in decisions on alternative locations, to deal with people affected by the parkway, and to design public use programs.

## 2.2 Design of Structure and Landscape Furnishings

Blue Ridge Parkway predecessors established a new standard for design of parkway structures such as bridges, signs, and buildings. Parkway structures, in contrast to those typical of highways, were naturally more park-like in character and made more extensive use of natural materials, earth tones, and indigenous forms.

Because the Blue Ridge Parkway was more park-like than its predecessors, typical parkway structure design concepts were extended from those devices serving primarily traffic to all man-made structures within parkway borders—interpretive markers, visitor centers, fences, and administrative facilities. Thus was born the concept of a park-wide architectural theme, in this case harmoniously capturing the flavor of a two-state mountain area.

Editorially I might note that recent years have witnessed an unfortunate erosion of this design theme, particularly in parkway's signs; the new ones are more akin to a highway environment than to a park.

The reason for this successful design is that the Blue Ridge Parkway didn't simply mimic earlier parkway structures, but rather adopted the concept of park-like structures and harmonized the concept to the southern Appalachian landscape through use of indigenous forms, materials, and colors. As we have seen, the parkways bridges, guardrails, signs—every man-made object—reflect the character of its environment.

In this reflection we see an extraordinary quality—the quality that our new National Park Service Director William Penn Mott is now demanding, and a quality unfortunately lacking in too many park environments.

## 2.3 Curvilinear Alignment

These mountains dictated use of another bit of borrowed technology—curvilinear alignment—in which gently sweeping curves connect short tangent sections of roadway. The result is a ribbon that adapts well to the topography and result in a flowing, enjoyable, and safe driving experience.

More than its predecessors, the Blue Ridge Parkway demonstrated the important relationship between horizontal and vertical alignments, that the two basic components of highway design must be considered as one, that horizontal and vertical curves should occur simultaneously.

This curvilinear alignment avoided long uninteresting tangents which only encourage high speed and induce drowsiness. Interstate highway system planners later adopted this principle, even in gentle terrain to provide a safer and more esthetic highway.

To draw an analogy, horizontal and vertical alignments in parkway design is similar to a music score with its treble and base bars—sometimes played separately, more often in unison, always in harmony.

## 2.4 Streamlined Cross-Section

Another bit of borrowed technology adopted to insure better ground fit was the so-called “streamlined cross-section.” This was achieved by laying out slopes back and extending fill slopes. But more important than simply flattening slopes, was the concept of variable slope, that is, the deeper the cut or fill, the steeper the slope and, conversely, the shallower the cut or fill, the flatter the slope. Thus was avoided the usual cookie-cutter, template effect which still characterizes so many of our state highways.

A detailed, but extremely important element of this streamlined cross-section is edge rounding, that is, rounding the edges created by the intersection of man-made ground planes and natural ones. Shoulder edges are rounded into rounded ditches or flattened back slopes.

The Blue Ridge Parkway pushed the streamlined cross-section concept outward to conceive the “day-lighted” cut. Artificial berms left on the downslope side of a shallow full-cut section were removed to naturalize the road’s appearance. In addition these daylighted cuts provided vistas, parking area sites, and borrow material to balance earthwork.

## 2.5 Turnouts, Rest Areas, and Recreation Areas

While daylighted cuts provided an occasional parking area, most stops along the Blue Ridge Parkway were carefully planned around resource or visual values. These waysides, spaced an average of only a mile apart, underscore the park, rather than traffic, orientation of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Their variety is mind boggling—scenic overlooks, historic sites, museums, tourist accommodations, information centers, campgrounds, natural phenomena, picnic areas, and more. Every key vista and feature is served.

Frequent recreation areas, usually centered around some prominent feature and some managed by other agencies, offer rather complete parks in themselves. The frequency and variety of all these waysides add immeasurably to the “completeness” of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

## 2.6 Full Roadside Development

Within the immediate roadway prism the Blue Ridge Parkway established

new standards of roadside development. Natural vegetation was rigorously protected; plantings were used sparingly and limited to native species. Top-soil was likewise protected and used to dress raw slopes and mixed with gravel to build stabilized turf shoulders, another effort to naturalize the motor road.

These roadside restoration and maintenance activities were guided by a Blue Ridge Parkway innovation called “Land Use Plans.” Still in use today, these plans established undulating mowing limits, defined vistas to be kept often, designated agricultural lands to be farmed, and located fences.

## **2.7 Land Acquisition**

Acquisition of lands for the Blue Ridge Parkway was unique in one respect and tradition in another. Like other national park projects in the east, most land was purchased by the states and donated to the National Park Service. Some lands were contributed by other public agencies and private donors.

The unique aspect of the acquisition program was the fact that among roadway projects, it was a corridor acquisition rather than simply a right-of-way acquisition. Consequently the park-like corridor varied considerably in width. Its boundaries were designed to encompass the immediate view-shed, not just the roadway itself, plus widenings to include areas of high resource value.

# **3. INNOVATIONS UNIQUE TO BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY**

While the Blue Ridge Parkway thus borrowed and perfected other's technologies, its planners and designers pioneered a number of parkway concepts.

## **3.1 Rural Adaptation of an Urban Concept**

Among these innovations was the fact that the Blue Ridge Parkway took an essentially urban concept from New York and adapted it to the rural setting of the Southern Appalachians. While in some respects similar to its predecessor Skyline Drive, it differed significantly in that it did not simply traverse a large natural park, nor a mountain spine, but rather a variety of rural landscapes, seeking to preserve each for its own inherent value.

Because of this rural environment, the planners were as concerned about the background and middle-ground views as the urban parkway planners were about the foreground. In contrast to its urban predecessors, for example, very little planting had to be installed to screen out objectionable views.

The result of this innovation was that the Blue Ridge Parkway is integral with its surrounding landscape, rather than a “stand alone” park or a land-use determinant like a typical highway.

### **3.2 Multi-Point Connector**

Another innovation of the Blue Ridge Parkway was its intent to connect a multitude of interest points. Previous parkways were largely and simply pleasant trafficways between two points; or, in the Skyline Drive case, a park road along which were developed attractions.

This innovation brought about the addition of new skills to the traditional engineer-landscape architect team. Resource assessment specialists, natural and social scientists, and interpreters entered the picture.

This freedom of location meant that Stan Abbott and his early colleagues had choices to insure variety. Earlier parkways had little choice but to go where the roadway could or must.

### **3.3 Land Management and Protection Tools**

Since the Blue Ridge Parkway was a different kind of park, or a parkway in a different kind of setting, innovations in land management and visual quality protection were required.

It was important to achieve and maintain landscape diversity. Hence, in addition to buying lands in the traditional park fashion, partial interests or scenic easements were used.

Jokingly, it's said that a scenic easement takes all rights from a property owner except the right to pay taxes! While these easements have been a continuing management problem, they have effectively increased the zone of visual quality protection.

This is important since the whole concept was not to "plant out" adjacent, unnatural land area, but rather to encourage a continuing panorama of rural diversity. Even lands bought in fee simple were often leased back for agricultural purposes to maintain the visual character, to reduce National Park Service maintenance workload, and to create good neighbors relations.

Another key Blue Ridge Parkway innovation was the cooperative land management efforts, borne no doubt of necessity due to the parkway's gerrymandered configuration. Now much in vogue and called "regional planning," from the outset the Blue Ridge Parkway staff has meticulously maintained and nurtured both legal and human relationships with easement grantors, local and state planning and highway agencies, tourism promotion groups and many others. Its predecessors, in contrast, both parks and parkways, once established were virtually autonomous, whereas the Blue Ridge Parkway was and still is greatly dependent on a collaborative effort.

### **3.4 A Full Service Parkway**

The Blue Ridge Parkway truly fulfilled the mandate implied in the word *Parkway*. Too often we equate a parkway with its motor road, but I like to

think of a parkway as much more than that, an elongated park through which is threaded a motor road. Or, if you wish, a series of park features connected by a pleasant roadway.

Hence, the Blue Ridge Parkway provides an enormous array of natural, cultural and recreational attractions, plus a full complement of commercial services for the traveler, but on a modest, harmonious scale. The staff is equally varied, and in contrast to the normal highway department cadre, has great depth in natural, cultural, and "people" management skills.

#### **4. INFLUENCES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY**

The Blue Ridge Parkway, and some of its contemporaries, have had significant influence on road design, both within parks as well as outside. Moreover, other systems within parks have been influenced, and areas adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway have been beneficially affected.

Taking this last influence first, while the Blue Ridge Parkway did effectively put mountain people to work, its indirect impacts through tourism have had much more sustained influence and much greater economic benefit to the region.

The Blue Ridge Parkway had notable influence on highway design, especially through the Bureau of Public Roads, now the Federal Highway Administration, and also through those few persevering landscape architects able to penetrate the fundamental location and design functions of state highway departments. This influence was virtually codified by the prestigious American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) when it established the objectives for Interstate Highway System design to include "pleasing appearance" as well as "safe and relaxed driving."

Because of its environmental success, the Blue Ridge Parkway no doubt contributed to our nation's environmental awareness, especially among road builders. Restoration of borrow pits and spoil areas, soil stabilization and revegetation, protection of natural and cultural features, and respect for community values, are now all accepted principles.

Streamlined cross-section designs, separated roadways, flowing alignments, and frequent rest areas brought about more adequate rights-of-way for new highways.

In parks around the country, indeed the world, you can see another influence brought about, at least in part, by the Blue Ridge Parkway. A consistent and harmonious design standard was established and respected by all for architectural objects, roadway structures, and "street furniture," especially signs, imposed upon park landscape.

Sadly I must report that this fundamental precept has not been consistently observed in all units of our National Park System. I noted last week in Yellowstone, that thousands of feet of ugly W-beams weathering steel guard

rail mounted on galvanized H-beam posts was being installed imparting a terrible visual character to one of the most scenic roads in the world's first National Park.

All of these influences, especially those of roadway geometry should be easy to "sell," because the Blue Ridge Parkway has been, and still is, as I understand, one of the safest roads in the country. While this is no reason to halt the quest to make it even safer, it's no reason either to compromise the inherent design characteristics that contribute now to its enviable safety record.

## 2. CONCLUSION

Most of the foregoing has been "look back." In concluding, we should take a clue from Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Gary Everhardt's opening remarks and look forward.

As I detected from Gary's remarks, the closure of the final gap at Grandfather Mountain does not complete the parkway. I hope this doesn't come as a great disappointment to all of you looking forward to the 1987 ribbon-cutting, as I am, but there are many unfinished items in this "perfect work."

More trails are essential. A parkway headquarters is needed. More camping and picnicking areas are required. And, most importantly, the visual quality of both man-made and natural values, the most important resource of the parkway, needs more protection.

I would be extremely remiss if I did not mention the absolute reliance we have on the "dog work" of maintenance to perpetuate this perfect work. Without continuing, enlightened maintenance of physical facilities, of visual values, and of human institutions, the Blue Ridge Parkway would soon become just another highway.

Moreover, rather than simply taking care of our own, in effect adopting a fortress mentality, and since we're not likely to replicate the Blue Ridge Parkway, or even extend it into Georgia or South Carolina, we can use its concepts and standards in our design of new roads and rehabilitation of old ones.

A recent *Washington Post* article sadly noted

"We don't build main roads like this any longer, and though the reasons are, up to a point, understandable, it is nonetheless a great shame. What has been largely lost is the esthetic dimension of road building...the skill—or is it the will? — to build beautiful highways has been displaced by sheer expediency...."

The article continues somewhat more upbeat by declaring that

“...in their form and very purpose the parkways represent an ideal that should not be surrendered lightly. This is nothing more, nor less, than a simple dictum: Highways can be beautiful. Or, to put it a slightly different way: Driving can be pleasant.”

In and of itself the Blue Ridge Parkway provides that experience. And it can provide an example for others to emulate.

# The Blue Ridge Parkway in Historical Design Perspective

by  
*E. Lynn Miller*

The Blue Ridge Parkway is not only a tract of land which "contains" a road but also a very unique landscape architectural design form evolving over several hundred years.

In 1869, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed the progenitor of America's residential communities. This plan for Riverside, Illinois, combining residential units with integral open space, projected a "parkway" which would connect this suburb with the city of Chicago. Although never built, it was one of the first uses of the term "parkway." Since the railroad was the primary means of transportation, one can assume that these two great masters envisioned a road primarily for pleasurable travel at a relative slow rate of speed. The use of the term "parkway" by Olmsted and Vaux was not a quirk of nomenclature but was the evolution of design influences and philosophies beginning with 18th century England and extending through the great park movement of the 19th century.

The triumphant and dictatorial design of the goosefoot intersection of Andre LeNotre produced a "king's highway of forced nature." This concept of highway design was an important factor because it encouraged the painters, poets, philosophers and "land improvers" of the 18th Century English Landscape School to design approaches and vehicular corridors which would relate to the land and would be a complimentary part of the newly organized and rehabilitated landscape.

The genius of Capability Brown's design at Stowe illustrates not only the territoriality of Brown as a designer but also a design scheme which placed emphasis on vehicular access as an integral part of the design. Through carefully, contrived vistas, modification of the ground form and articulated approach roads, Brown succeeded in satisfying the dictum: "...the foot should not tread where the eye has already been."<sup>1</sup> The precept of this dictum was a very important factor for the 18th century English Gentleman, who armed with a Claude Glass (camera obscura), traveled far and near to study, view and assess these romantic landscapes. This overwhelming desire to contemplatively view the landscape was part of a vast movement which rehabilitated a "sick" and denuded landscape by planting indigenous trees, stopping soil erosion and putting organic matter back into the soil.

Therefore, as landscapes for country seats were created the approach road became an extremely important and significant element of the design. Humphry Repton, in his writings, pointed out:

“...the road is an artificial work of convenience and at one time had been deployed as the most ostentatious feature through the centre of parks...”<sup>2</sup>

In his design for Woburn, Repton writes:

“...Utility suggests that the road should be the shortest possible: it was for this reason that in former times the straight line was adopted, accompanied by rows of trees leading to the front of the house, which was probably the origin of avenues....”

“Such an expedient is beneath the dignity of Art, which should display her works naturally, and without puerile ostentation....”

“When the oblique line was adopted, and a road brought through the park, instead of taking a straight line, it was discovered that, with very little deviation, some interesting parts of the scenery might be shown in the approach; and by degrees its first object, that of being the nearest way to the house, was changed into that of being the most beautiful. Hence have arisen all the absurdities of circuitous approaches, so aptly ridiculed by a modern poet in describing improvers, who:

‘lead us many a tedious round to show the extent of their employer’s ground.’ ”<sup>3</sup>

Repton’s design for the country seat at Sheringham (figure 1 and 2) illustrates the detail and careful orchestration of an approach road. After traveling one half a mile on a road through a dense rhododendron thicket, the viewer is brought to a point where he gets a brief glimpse of the sea, the house and then as the road continues—the viewer is engulfed in the total landscape.

Eventually, these man-made landscapes, at a park-like scale with their unique approach roads, caught the astute and keen eye of observers such as Prince Pueckler, Andrew Jackson Downing, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Charles Eliot.

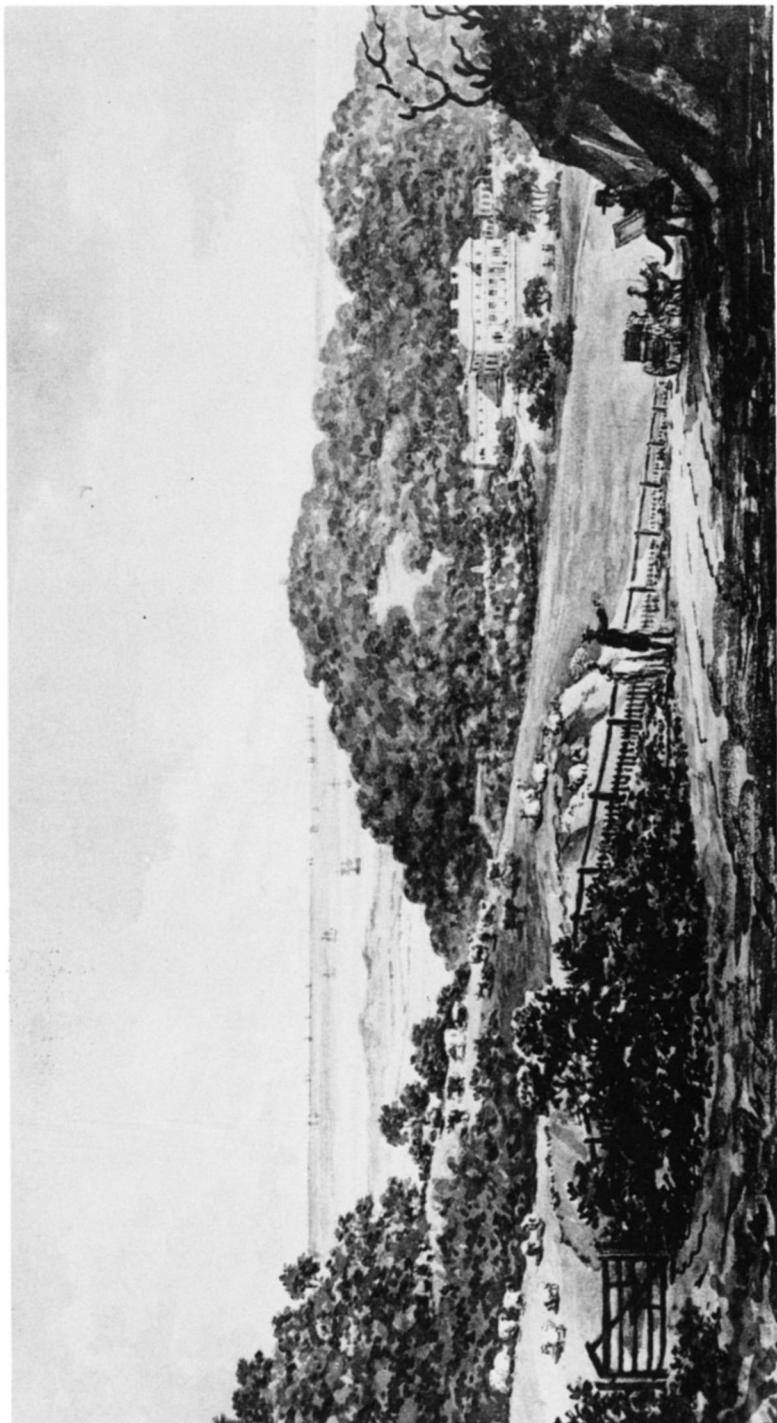
Prince Pueckler in the design for his two great public parks (located in what is now the German Democratic Republic) became the first professional to discuss the design characteristics and the spatial relationships of roads and the necessity to incorporate the activities of man into the total landscape.

In Pueckler’s *Hints on Landscape Gardening* published in 1835, he projected criteria for the design of roads and park drives:

“...roads and paths should not run in continual curves like a serpent wound round a stick, but should rather make such bends as serve a definite purpose easily and effectively, following as far as possible the natural contours of the ground....”

“...two curves close together in the same road or path seen at the





same time do not look well. If this cannot be entirely avoided, then a sharp turn should be relieved by a larger, more rounded turn, and the former should seem justified by trees or plantations on the inner side (figure 3). If there is no obstacle the road should be allowed to run straight or only slightly curved, no matter what the distance. Wherever an obstacle appears, it is better to make a short turn close to it than a long, gradual turn for the sake of the so called curve of beauty. The sharp turns are by far the more picturesque, especially if the road disappears with such a turn in the depths of a forest.”<sup>4</sup>

The writings of Repton and Prince were widely read and discussed in this country and incorporated into the literature of the period. Edgar Allan Poe in the short story “Landor’s Cottage” provided the following description of a road:

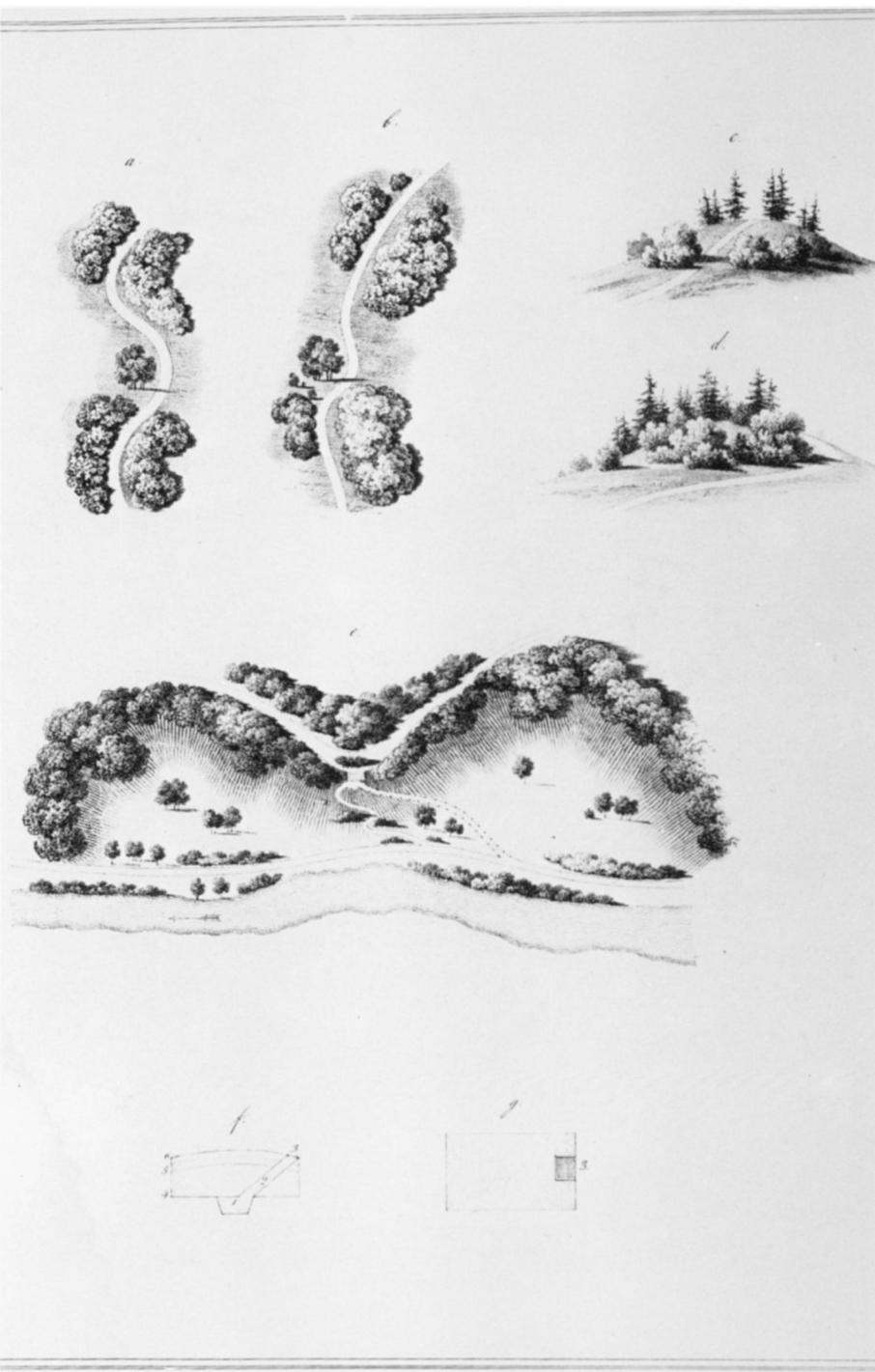
“The road, except in being open through the wood bore no resemblance to any road that I had seen before...what to make of all this, of course I knew not. Here was art undoubtedly—that did not surprise me....It was not the amount but the character of the art which caused me to gaze up and down in bewildered admiration....there were few straight, and no long uninterrupted lines. Everywhere was variety in uniformity. It was a piece of ‘composition,’ in which the most fastidiously critical taste could scarcely have suggested an emendation....”<sup>5</sup>

By 1858 these design principles and early philosophies were manifested in the design of the Greensward Plan for Central Park by Olmsted and Vaux. The Greensward Plan not only provided separate traffic systems but emphasized park drives for contemplative viewing to the point of advising the park visitor of the direction to travel for the proper experience.

Therefore, it should not be a surprise to find a “parkway” proposed in the Olmsted and Vaux plan for Riverside. If one scrutinizes the executed design for Riverside, one will find the Olmsted trademark of the sunken roadway which was not the “cut and fill” design of the normal highway engineer. Although some of the depth has been lost from a century of road repair and additions of layers of asphalt, it still represents the historical perspective of landscape architectural design which the late Eugene DeSilets described as follows:

“Like a surgeon, the landscape architect makes the incision to graft into nature a man-made device and carefully sews up the wound to restore the natural skin or cover.”<sup>6</sup>

Following Riverside, the term “parkway” was utilized by Olmsted and others but it never became a definitive design form which succinctly distinguished it from boulevard and avenues. In the period of time between Riverside and the Bronx River Parkway, the only professional to attempt a design form similar to our present day parkway was Charles Eliot. Eliot,



trying to get the Metropolitan District commission to think creatively beyond boulevards and ordinary roads, prepared designs for parkways in which he showed sensitivity to the land and an awareness to environmental constraints. Eliot's proposed parkway had a right-of-way of 120 feet with a large median strip for the inclusion of electric street cars to make the park reservations accessible to the masses and the parkway use was to be restricted to pleasure vehicles. In addition to this, Eliot saw his parkways as valuable fireguards to protect forest reservations. Unfortunately, the Metropolitan District Commission did not follow Eliot's advice and this initiative towards the creation of a true parkway was lost.

With the deaths of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., Henry Codman, and Charles Eliot, landscape architecture headed into a doldrum where many of these guiding principles and philosophies were forgotten or were not suitable for the eclectic mood of the era. The confusion of this era is illustrated by J.C. Olmsted's article in *Landscape Architecture Quarterly* in October of 1915 where the distinction between boulevards, avenues and parkways are made on the basis of size rather than on the basis of any design criteria.

The pregnancy of the parkway idea had to gestate until the work of the Bronx River Commission in the early 1900's at which time the birth took place as part of an 18 year effort to clean up the Bronx River so that it would not be injurious to waterfowl in the Zoological Park. It was here that the present day parkway got its distinct definition. As Norman T. Newton succinctly states in *Design on the Land*:

"The parkway was not itself a road, it contained a road. The strip of land was not just a highway with uniform grassy borders; it was of significantly varying width, depending on immediate topographic and cultural conditions. The roadway.....was meant for comfortable driving in pleasant surrounding, not merely for getting from one place to another as fast as possible. Perhaps most important was the distinctive provision that abutting owners had no right of light, air, or access over the parkway strip."<sup>7</sup>

The Bronx River Parkway had resulted in a revolutionary design form which legitimately included the activities of 20th century man. Following this legitimate birth were successive generations of offsprings including the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The Blue Ridge Parkway with its added feature of the scenic easement brought this unique design form to its culminating peak of success. Its success echoes Prince Pueckler's words when he wrote:

"The park should appear to be untrammeled Nature where the only human activity visible are the well kept roads and the judiciously scattered buildings."<sup>8</sup>

In its modern day sense, the unique design form was best described by Freeman Tilden when he wrote:

"This is one road where, because the highway is protected by a

buffer strip, the traveler will not be importuned to use any particular shaving cream, dentifrice, or chewing gum. There are no signs suggesting that you come in just as you are and eat at a restaurant that went out of business several years ago. If you wish advice on what pills to take for your special misery, you will have to leave the Blue Ridge Parkway and make use of the older routes.”<sup>9</sup>

#### END NOTES

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# The Linn Cove Viaduct

by  
Jean Muller

*A vital link in completing the Blue Ridge Parkway, Linn Cove Viaduct hugs the contours of a rugged mountain. Top down construction of the precast post-tensioned segmental cantilevers preserved the natural landscape. OCEA Award of Merit.*

How to preserve the scenic environment around Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina was a problem that left a seven mile gap in the 469 mile (755 km) long Blue Ridge Parkway for more than 20 years. The solution is a precast concrete segmental viaduct that was built from the top down without disturbing the site of its scenic vistas.

The 1,243 ft (379 m) Linn Cove Viaduct is a post-tensioned box girder winding around the mountain in an S curve. Connecting roadways that will finish the gap will be completed by 1987.

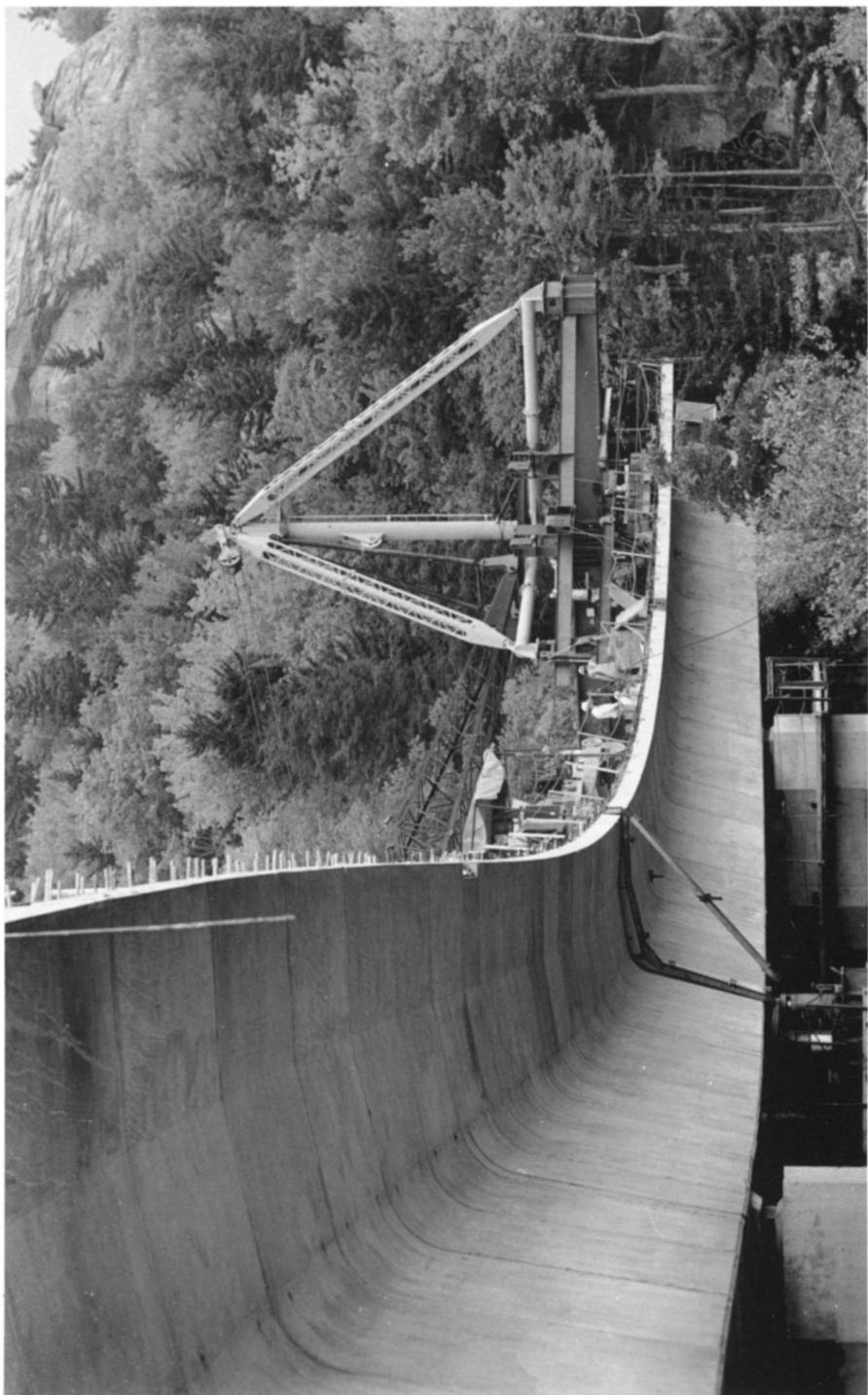
The environmental constraints and inaccessibility of the site — the bridge itself was the only way in or out — and alignment problems make Linn Cove the most complicated concrete segmental bridge ever constructed. Horizontal alignment includes spiral curves going into circular curves with radii as small as 250 ft (76 m) curving in two directions. Only a small portion is on a horizontal tangent. No two of the 153 segments have the same dimensions, and only one segment in the entire bridge is straight.

The box girder segments are nominally 8½ ft long, 9 ft deep and 37½ ft across the slab (2.6 m x 2.7 m x 11 m). The segments were cast using one of the most sophisticated concrete mixes ever developed for a segmental bridge in the U.S. The coarse aggregate was crushed dolomitic stone, and the fine aggregate was quartz sand. The aggregate was transported to the casting site about a mile from the bridge site. A Type 1 cement was used to obtain the specified 28 day strength of 6,000 psi (41.4 MPa) and the lifting strength specified at 4,000 psi (27.6 MPa).

Admixtures included air entraining agents, retarders and a super water reducer. An iron oxide pigment was also added to tint the concrete to match the color of the existing rock on Grandfather Mountain.

Because the mountain is notorious for high winds and severe winter weather, casting was done inside a metal building so that work could proceed during the winter. Completed segments were stored along the roadway leading to the bridge site. The post-tensioned box piers precast in 30 ton (27 Mg) segments were match cast vertically.

All segment erection, including foundation segments, took place from the top down by one-directional cantilever. Normally, progressive placement





incorporates temporary cable stays on top of the bridge, but because of the curves, attaching the cables and carrying the loads would have been extremely difficult. Instead, temporary steel bents were used at midpoint of each span as the cantilever progressed. The unusual stress conditions were analyzed by computer and erection proceeded without a single problem.

The precast box piers are founded on drilled microshaft piles that are reinforced and grouted. This drilling was the only construction activity at ground level ahead of superstructure erection. The tops of the microshafts are encased in a footing, which was the only cast in place concrete required to build the piers.

Pier shaft segments are either 6 or 9 ft high (1.8 or 2.7 m). The first segment of each pier was placed before the footing was cast to allow proper alignment; this assured that the top of the pier would be located in the correct position.

The pier segments were trucked from the storage area over the completed portion of the bridge to the end of the cantilever. Then a stiffleg crane picked up the segment, swung it around and lowered it to proper position. Joints were bonded with epoxy and the new segment stressed to the previously erected one with thread bar tendons. All tendons were grouted for bond and corrosion protection prior to placing the pier cap.

Once the cap was set, eight 12-strand post-tensioning tendons were installed, starting at the top of the pier and extending through and out of the side of the footing. These were then stressed and grouted.

Superstructure segments were also delivered to the cantilever end by truck. There the stiffleg crane lifted the segment, swung it out and lowered it to within 6 in. (152 mm) of the cantilever end. Epoxy was then applied to the joint face and the segment was moved to the cantilever end where the temporary thread bars were installed and stressed. The thread bars extend through intermediate stiffeners, which made them accessible both during stressing and later removal. The entire operation, from the time the segment reached the end of the cantilever on the truck to attachment, took from 60 to 90 minutes.

The final step of the erection process was threading and stressing the permanent tendons consisting of 19 low relaxation strands  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (12.7 mm) in diameter and 270 ksi (1,861 MPa). The erection or negative moment tendons are located in the top of the box girder section, generally extending from the cantilever end to a symmetrical point beyond the first support. The stressing end of the tendon is at the cantilever end junction of the web and top slab, with the opposite end coming outside the box girder void at a stiffener location. Locating anchors in these areas provided plenty of concrete to distribute anchorage stresses.

Positive moment tendons are located in the bottom of the section with both ends terminating at intermediate stiffeners. The stressing sequence of these tendons was predetermined by computer analysis.





The Linn Cove project, like others of its type, had an epoxy specification requiring the concrete to be above 40F (4.4C). A special joint heating system allowed the contractor to continue placing segments through the winter months. More than 20 were erected using this method, and its success has important ramifications for other precast segmental projects built in the northern part of the U.S. and Canada.

During construction of the bridge, the position of the superstructure matched the predicted location at all times. Joint thicknesses of 0.02 in (0.5 mm) achieved regularly are due to precise casting control.

Aesthetically, the completed viaduct looks as if it had always been part of the face of Grandfather Mountain. The innovative erection scheme was highly successful. No trees, other than those directly in the path of the bridge, were cut. No rock outcroppings were damaged, as they had been covered during construction to prevent concrete, grout or epoxy from staining them.

Construction of the \$7.9 million viaduct began in 1978 and the last segment was placed in December 1982. During 1983 the contractor cast the curbing, completed the abutment, completed the grade on the north end of the viaduct (inaccessible before the bridge was erected), installed guardrails and applied a waterproofing membrane and wearing surface.



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# Strategic Planning: The Means for Seeing Beyond 1987

by  
*Gary W. Johnson*

## INTRODUCTION

The legislated purpose of the Blue Ridge Parkway under the Act of June 30, 1936, is to link Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee by way of a recreationally oriented motor road. The intent of the legislation that established the parkway was to provide an elongated park for public use and enjoyment through safe, uninterrupted, leisure motor travel and the conservation and interpretation of the natural and cultural resources of the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

This concept is embodied today in a Parkway that winds 470 miles through the Blue Ridge, Black, Great Craggy, Great Balsam, and Plott Balsam Mountains. Since the Blue Ridge Parkway's establishment in 1936, literally thousands of people have focused their energy and talents on construction of the 470-mile-long motor road. Those efforts will soon be realized with completion of the Parkway motor road around Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina, scheduled in 1987.

Both the 50th anniversary celebration on September 11, 1985 and the 1987 completion of the motor road mark the dawn of a new era for Parkway management. Management's focus on design and construction is now shifting towards protection of Parkway resources.

There is a question inherent in this management shift: When the motor road is fully open, will the Parkway be finished in terms of development, and will management's role be one simply of housekeeping and caretaking? On the surface, the answer might appear to be yes; management need only take care of what has been constructed over the past 50 years. However, for a park that extends through two states, 29 counties, and seven congressional districts; has some 5,000 adjacent private property owners; and will host some 20 million visitors in 1985, there are no simple questions or answers. Just the mention of the future of the Parkway generates a great deal of conversation and differing opinions about what future Parkway needs will be. One shared opinion: A degree of commitment, creativity, and skill equal to or greater than that required during the last 50 years, will be needed if the National Park Service is to meet the challenge of protecting Parkway resources over the next half-century.

The National Park Service is committed to making an effective, well-

planned management transition into the next 50 years of Parkway operation. Balancing commitment against sound planning is the key to making that transition. Planning will entail more than collecting data and plotting trends. Aggressive actions are required to meet goals and objectives. While many planning opportunities for affecting future Parkway management have been discussed informally, an attempt to relate them in a comprehensive way has been initiated only recently. Parkway management and staff persons have identified the need to approach the future through a strategic or long-range planning process.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

In January of 1985, Superintendent Gary Everhardt, members of his staff, and Park Service planner met to design a strategic plan for the Blue Ridge Parkway. Strategic planning is not unknown to parkway management and the Park Service's Southeast Region management staff.

Regional Director Bob Baker earlier had appointed Superintendent Everhardt chairman of a task force to implement strategic planning on a regionwide basis. That effort was completed during October 1984, a little over 18 months after it commenced. Planning for the Parkway has become an extension of that effort, only with a more park specific focus.

The goal of Parkway strategic planning is to provide a forum for the identification of issues, needs, and problems in the Blue Ridge Parkway region. Mounting demands on the Parkway and its resources, as well as changing land uses, demographic trends, and economics, require realistic management strategies. To reach these strategies two objectives must first be met. They are the following:

1. Identify immediate issues, needs, and problems through various methods, including surveys, meetings, and discussions. Initiate assessment and analyze steps to clarify issues and identify specific needs; develop strategies to resolve issues and make recommendations to regional director.
2. Identify likely future demand and formulate strategies, policies, and directions for increasing the reliability of management to meet future requirements.

Tasks to accomplish strategic planning are organized into five phases, as follows:

- Phase 1. Small group work sessions in Virginia and North Carolina with knowledgeable participants from outside the National Park Service to identify parkway values, immediate issues, and future concerns.
- Phase 2. Summarize results of group sessions and distribute, with comment worksheets, to those attending the Blue Ridge Parkway 50th anniversary conference as well as on a regional basis to identify

- Phase 3. Parkway purposes, values, issues, and trends.
- Phase 4. A series of small task forces consisting of NPS and outside participants to develop management strategies addressing related issues.
- Phase 5. Strategic planning summary report will outline issues, management strategies for resolving issues, means to accomplish management via traditional Park Service plans or necessary innovative means.

Phase 1 was implemented in March of 1985. Invited participants from outside the National Park Service attended meetings held in Asheville, North Carolina and at Peaks of Otter, Virginia. These participants brought to the meetings a diverse range of professional and personal expertise from their positions in local, state, and federal government, education, the news media, and in organizations related to tourism, travel, and recreation.

Three categories of information were collected at each meeting: perceived parkway values, current issues, and future issues. The number and the depth of the values and issues expressed by participants demonstrated a strong interest in and understanding of the Parkway. It was obvious that the participants were well aware of the complex relationships that exist between the Parkway and the various jurisdictions through which it passes.

Although the meetings occurred some 300 miles apart, each with completely different participants, the perceptions and concerns expressed were remarkably similar. Of the values identified, both groups<sup>1</sup> highest priority was given the Parkway's role as an easily accessible place to escape the stress and routine of everyday life. Secondly, they valued the Parkway for the opportunity it provides for viewing the scenic beauty of the Southern Appalachian landscape. The third value was the parkway's contributions to local economies through its role in travel and tourism. Lastly, the groups valued parkway resources and facilities for providing needed recreation and interpretive opportunities.

With the parkway values in mind, both groups singled out urbanization and other forms of encroachment as their primary concern, currently and in the future. The dynamic relationships between the parkway and the surrounding region and the unavoidable impacts they have on each other was seen as management's top challenge both today and well into tomorrow.

Participants were aware that for the last several years management has concentrated on completion of the parkway motor road, but felt there now is a shift toward management and protection of parkway resources. As completion of the motor road nears, maturity of the resources is being more greatly realized. Both meeting groups spoke clearly about how management's challenge now is in constructing the methods and finding the means to protect resources that are valued on national and international scales.

On the following pages are either external or internal issues combined from both meetings. Issues are summarized by management topics.

## VISUAL RESOURCES

**External Issues**—Traditional land uses are changing and there is lack of regulation on adjacent lands to assure use and development that is compatible with parkway values.

**Internal Issues**—Landscape planting areas are maturing and becoming overgrown. There is the need for a landscape renovation plan to reaffirm the effectiveness of plant materials to enhance the scenic experience of driving the parkway.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

**External Issues**—Increasing instances of forest decline, air and water pollution, resource extraction, and disposal of hazardous waste.

**Internal Issues**—Increases in visitor use at some sites and the need to thoroughly identify rare and endangered and/or critical natural resources.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

**External Issues**—Unclear responsibility of parkway management in perpetuating values of regional cultural landscapes and in identifying past and emerging cultural themes, periods, and material expressions.

**Internal Issues**—Lack of documentation and definitive strategies for identifying and managing prehistoric and historic resources.

## INTERPRETATION/EDUCATION

**External Issues**—Present interpretive media and messages lack diversity and are limited to specific and often unrelated sites rather than the more overall interrelated regional picture.

**Internal Issues**—Messages and media are outdated.

## VISITOR NEEDS, ACTIVITIES, AND PROTECTION

**External Issues**—Need to provide more information about off-parkway sites, resources and facilities compatible with parkway values, and coordinate related programs with the appropriate agencies.

**Internal Issues**—Need to determine what services visitors want, where they want them, who they want to provide it, and how much they are willing to pay for it.

Need to determine appropriate level of site use versus resource values.

## ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

**External Issues**—Existing public as well as private accesses act as a stimulus for off-parkway development and increased traffic.

**Internal uses**—Increased traffic in both recreational and commuting use are slowing traffic, causing congestion and visitor frustration.

## DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMICS

**External Issues**—Conflict between off-parkway development and land use for private economic gain versus protection of parkway resources and values.

Lack of knowledge about economic importance of parkway on adjacent counties.

**Internal Issues**—Need for visitor profile data to determine who parkway visitors are, why do they come, what do they do on the parkway, where do they come from, what do they want to do, etc.

## LEGAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND POLITICAL MANDATES AS CONSTRAINTS

**External Issues**—Inability of federal government and unwillingness of state and county governments to take action on implementing land-use controls. Conflicts between public agencies because of different mandates.

**Internal Issues**—Budgetary changes caused by different funding philosophies under varying administrations.

## SUMMARY

At this time Phase 1 is complete and Phase 2 is nearly so. The number and complexity of issues identified thus far make a very strong case for the role of future parkway management being one of more than simply housekeeping. It is becoming apparent that where the National Park Service once could concentrate on activities within the Parkway corridor, it now is being drawn into a whole milieu of issues generated outside of its jurisdiction. Strategic planning, as park management has undertaken it, provides a systematic way to see and anticipate beyond the Parkway boundary and jurisdiction.

While the planning effort is not yet complete, some management strategy recommendations have become obvious. They are being shared now for informational purposes and probably will be expanded at a later date in the phase 5 summary report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Inventory, document, and prioritize visual natural, and cultural resources into levels of significance so that resource protection can be assured.
2. Develop a computerized system for storing and managing resource information so that data can be quickly updated and modeled to support planning and decision-making.
3. Initiate a study to determine the economic worth of parkway to various entities.
4. Develop and use a marketing plan that encourages a cooperative approach to visitor services throughout the Parkway region.
5. Work with adjacent counties and states to determine significant visual, natural, and cultural resources related to but outside parkway boundary; develop a land protection plan that relates tourist dollars to resources visitors appreciate.
6. Work to establish an appropriate organization or foundation with the authority to deal with increasing external influences, such as urbanization, through acquisition of threatened lands.

Various perspectives and the insights of many people will be required to address the preceding issues and to then implement recommended management strategies. Parkway Superintendent Everhardt acknowledges that it will be impossible for the National Park Service to accomplish this planning alone. He is actively seeking information, advice, and cooperation from Parkway neighbors to accomplish the "mission of protecting a generous slice of Southern Appalachian natural and cultural history." To further that end, please provide your thoughts on the future of the parkway on the attached comment worksheet.

## COMMENT WORKSHEET

This worksheet is provided so you might share your ideas for planning the future of the Blue Ridge Parkway. As management emphasizes shifts from 50 years of parkway design and construction to managing and protecting parkway resources, your comments are most important. We need your thoughts on protection of scenic resources, managing parkway access, renovating overgrown vistas and landscape areas, providing visitor services, interpretation, working with other federal, state, and local agencies, and overall management direction.

Look over the questions identified below and add your comments. Feel free to attach additional sheets for comments and other ideas that you have about the parkway's future. Please complete and return the worksheet to:

Superintendent  
National Park Service  
Blue Ridge Parkway  
700 Northwestern Bank Building  
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

1. What is the purpose of the Blue Ridge Parkway? (Define what you believe the parkway is now and what it should become)

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2. What do you value most about the Blue Ridge Parkway? (List three)

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3. Which of the parkway values that you identified in No. 2 do you believe will be compromised in the future and now?

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4. What is the parkway's present visitor market, and how well does the Park Service serve it?

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5. Is there anything else visitors want that is not being provided now?

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6. What natural resource issues does parkway management need to address?  
(current)

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7. What cultural resource issues does parkway management need to address?

(current)

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(future)

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8. What trends in land use, urbanization, economics, agriculture, recreation, folk culture, demographics, etc. do you believe will affect parkway management?

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Please identify other ideas and issues you think should be considered:

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In your own priority of concerns, please tell us what you think is the most important thing to keep in mind when planning for future management of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Please give us your *reasons* for your choice — that is very important:

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# A New Deal for the Mountain Folk: Recollections of the Resettlement Administration

by

*Gwen Russell Harvey and Alice Hoffman*

The Shenandoah Homesteads Project in Virginia was a federal program designed to relocate the people who would be displaced by the incoming Skyline Drive and Shenandoah National Park. The project was initiated in 1934 but was taken over by the Resettlement Administration when it was created in 1935. The Resettlement Administration was one of Roosevelt's New Deal programs which attempted to alleviate the nation's growing poverty problem. The idea was to move poor people out of their work scarce communities or off their exhausted land and relocate them in model communities with steady employment. Many of the projects were designed to be supported by a local industry, such as the government-built furniture making factory at Arthurdale, West Virginia, one of Mrs. Roosevelt's special interests. Others were to be supported by means of a cooperative farm or dairy. Initially the federal government would buy the land and lease it to the resettled people at a low interest rate. They were to repay the loan and eventually become the owners.

These ideas were very controversial. Felix Brunner in a series of Washington Post articles called it "one of the most far-flung experiments in paternalistic government ever attempted in the United States."<sup>1</sup> Harry F. Byrd, Senator from Virginia, said the program was "a permanent monument to a waste and extravagance such as has never before been known in a civilized country."<sup>2</sup> He was especially critical of the high cost of the houses on the Shenandoah Homesteads Project and scrutinized every phase of the project.

And in fact, many of the Resettlement Administration's aims were not practical. The idea of dispersing a big centralized factory into many different communities became ineffective when industries felt they could not cooperate for economic reasons. And people, including some of the Shenandoah area mountaineers, often resented the governmental intrusion into their private lives, even if that government was trying to help them.

The Resettlement Administration (which in 1937 became the Farm Security Administration) also had successes. Many agonizingly poor people were given sturdy new homes, good land and the first chance in their lives to pull themselves out of debt.

Largely because of its novel approach to old societal problems, the Resettlement Administration attracted many dedicated and idealistic people. One

such person was Nelson H. Cruikshank.

Cruikshank was born in 1902 and raised in the small town of Fostoria, Ohio. He inherited his father's liberalism, strong opinions and eloquence. Cruikshank majored in economics at Ohio Wesleyan University where he received his BA degree in 1925. He then studied at Union Theological Seminary and became a Methodist minister. Cruikshank declares that he undertook the ministry from a desire to work for the general social welfare of people. Having grown up in a small town, the ministry was the only conceivable outlet for such work.

When Cruikshank moved out into the wider world and met with more opportunities, he began to feel that he could accomplish more outside of the church. He was working for the Emergency Peace campaign when a friend from the electrical workers' union in New Haven told him of a possible job in Raleigh, North Carolina, as a labor relations officer for the Resettlement Administration. Cruikshank jumped at the offer, was interviewed and hired.

He was very pleased with the new job since it was directly related to furthering his conviction that the government could and should try to help all people to be able to live decently. "Before," he says, "I felt I was just putting shin-plasters on a sick society, I wanted to really get involved..." But as is always the case when working for an institution, especially one as huge and complex as the federal government, Cruikshank often found obstacles in his path. This was especially the case in dealing with the Shenandoah Homesteads Project in Virginia.

When Cruikshank first visited the Shenandoah Project, it became obvious to him that the impoverished mountain people who were to be resettled in the wake of the incoming Park should have a hand in building their own houses. He then did not let any barrier such as government red-tape, a recalcitrant resident engineer, or the mountain people's own cultural isolation deter him. He found he was not alone in his struggle. He often received unexpected aid from others who had become equally convinced of the worthiness of the endeavor.

The same spirit of devotion to public service has since led Cruikshank to direct the Farm Security Administration's migrant worker camps famous in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, to a seven year battle lobbying for Medicare on behalf of the AFL-CIO, to serve as President of the National Council of Senior Citizens, and as counselor to President Carter on Aging.

The following story of the Shenandoah Homesteads Project is an edited transcript of a series of taped interviews conducted with Nelson H. Cruikshank in his apartment in Washington, D.C. in June, 1977.

I reported for work (for the Resettlement Administration) on January 18, 1937 at the headquarters of Region IV in Raleigh, North Carolina. This particular story starts with the fact that there was a double reason for resettling the mountain people of the Shenandoah area. The Department of Interior had just taken over the land for the parks to build the Skyline Drive.

There was no road at the time going along the Blue Ridge Mountains. Now, it goes all the way from Front Royal, Virginia down to the Blue Ridge Parkway in the Great Smokies. The government developed the National Park and put unemployed workers to work building the highway. Well, the purpose of this piece of resettlement was that with the Skyline Drive and the National Park being set up, you couldn't have these people who had no economic base at all starving to death on the edge of the park. So the idea was to take these families and build seven little villages for them: Elktown, Madison, Ida Valley, Wolftown, C.B.I. School, Washington, and Flint Hill.

The people who lived in this section of Appalachia belonged to some of the oldest American families. They had old Anglo-Saxon names like Nicholson, Corbin and Adams. In the migration westward, they had become kind of locked in. This was a little back eddy of the Western movement of families out of coastal plains. They came soon after the Revolutionary War and built substantial cabins and clapboard houses. Then their little farms enabled them to live rather decently. In those days, there were two or three other economic bases for them to live on. One of them was a luxuriant growth of chestnut trees. They would gather the chestnuts, and chestnuts sold quite well in the cities.

Then along about the time of World War I, there was a chestnut blight that hit and destroyed every chestnut tree east of the Ohio River. Well, that cut out that foundation for a cash income. About the same time the chestnuts died off, prohibition came in and these boys knew how to make liquor back in those hills. Today even, if you go off the Skyline Drive you can go to places and see the remnants of some of those stills.

Then the Roosevelt Administration came along, and Prohibition was repealed. The bootleg liquor that had brought a high price all but disappeared. So, one thing after another had just pulled the economic bottom out of their existence. They had no way of making any other cash with one exception.<sup>3</sup> This was only a few miles away from where Senator Harry F. Byrd had his vast apple orchards. Every fall those apples had to be picked. He would hire these people to come in for a dollar a day and pick the apples. This would give them maybe fifteen or twenty dollars cash income in the whole year. That's all they had. Their background was such, too, that they carried over a number of the characteristics of their ancestors. They were fiercely independent and they wanted to work but there were just no jobs for 'em anywhere in the area. They were a poor but proud people.

Now, it wasn't my job to be on the social side of it. I was just to see that the engineer in charge of construction behaved himself, and that he didn't cheat on the labor and so forth. But when I got to know just a little bit about the people and I saw how proud and independent they were, I said, "It's all wrong for the government to build these houses and have them all built and then say, 'Mr. So-and-So, here's your house. Move in.' They ought to have a part in building them because they resented anything that

looked like charity. Furthermore," I said, "if we let them do some of the building, they can earn wages on it. They're unemployed like anybody else and we don't need to bring in a lot of labor from the outside."

Well the engineer, he didn't like this idea at all. He called them a bunch of hillbillies. The engineer's name was Mosby and he proudly claimed that he was a grandson of General Mosby in the Confederate army. He was very proud of that. He liked to think of himself as a tough guy. But I said to him, "Well, Mr. Mosby, these people, I know there're not many skilled craftsmen, but all these ditches to be dug, all these roads to be built, the clearing to be done, all of that common labor these people can do as well as anybody else. You can pay them so it will lessen the debt." They were to go into these places and buy them off, pay the government back. That was the theory. "They don't want to go in loaded with debt. They want to have a feeling that they helped build these houses." But he resisted it.

I went back to Washington and I told my boss, Dr. Evans, I think there's a very interesting project out here aside from labor relations. I'd like to have a couple of weeks. He said, "Okay." He was a very socially minded guy.

I found out that if I wanted to get these men to work, I'd have to see an old man named Leroy Nickeron who was the patriarch of the area. His name wasn't actually Nickerson, that's the way they pronounced it. It was a common name and there was a Nickerson Valley and a Nickerson Creek and all. But on the map it's spelled N-I-C-H-O-L-S-O-N. So, I wrote to Mr. Leroy Nicholson, General Delivery, Luray, Virginia. I said "I'll be in Luray at the Post Office at 10:00 on a certain morning," I think it was the 18th of February, "And I'd like to meet you there and talk about the prospect of you and some of your associates going to work on the government project."

When the time for the meeting came I was there but Mr. Nicholson never showed up. I waited around a little while, went next door and got a cup of coffee. Finally I came back and said to the Postmaster, "Does Mr. LeRoy Nicholson get his mail here?" The Postmaster said, "Oh, you the feller that wrote him that letter from Raleigh?" He said, "It's here." "I wrote it ten days ago," I said. "Oh yeah," he said, "but Mr. Nicholson won't come down to get his mail until sometime in the spring. He doesn't come in here in the winter, ever. He comes in two or three times a year and gets his mail. It's here, I got your letter right here," he said.

So then, I went and looked up the forest ranger and I said, "I guess if I am to see Mr. Nicholson, I've gotta find him." He said, "That's right. How's your car?" I said, "It's all right." I had a Nash Lafayette. He looked at it and said, "Well, it's got pretty high wheels. I guess we can make it. We can make it all but the last few miles."

The ranger rode out with me and we went over the boulders and forded streams and finally it came down to where it was no longer safe to take a car. So we walked down a trail and came upon a cabin with a garden plot near it. The ranger introduced me to an old man with long, white whiskers.

Mr. Nicholson and I sat on the stoop, with his family gathered around us, and discussed the matter of his people going to work. I told him about how they were building the project and that the people were gonna move out. And yes, he knew they were going to have to move out and he didn't like that. He'd lived in this cabin and his father had lived in the cabin. Well, I remember, and this is a very important part, I was sitting facing Mr. Nicholson and the ranger kind of moved where he was behind him but not directly behind him, kind of over his shoulder. Finally Nicholson said to me, "Well, I'll tell you, young fellar," he said, "can you come back tomorrow?" Oh, and I thought of that long road, banging over those rocks, fording those streams and the walk down there and I looked over his shoulder and noticed that the ranger ws vigorously nodding his head, yes, So I said, "Yes, Mr. Nicholson, I'll be glad to come back tomorrow if it's necessary." Nicholson said, "Yes, I'll have to talk it over with my boys, and I'll talk it over and we'll let you know tomorrow if we'll go along."

Going back up the hill with the ranger, and I did need him because the path forked every hundred yards or so; if you didn't know your way around, you could get lost so easily, I said, "Why didn't the old boy sign up now? Why do I have to come back?" He said to me, "Cruikshank, these people have been fooled. People have taken advantage of them. They're very wary of somebody that wants them to sign up right now." He said, "He's gonna go along. I know him well enough, know his attitude and the way he talked to you. He'll call in some of his boys tonight and he'll sell 'em the idea. You come back tomorrow and he'll tell you that it's all right. But he wants to be sure that you were willing to come back. That was the test of your good faith." The ranger and I went back the next day and Mr. Nicholson did agree to go along.

Well, the next thing we get them registered as being unemployed at the local employment office in Culpeper, Virginia. I remember very well the person in charge was Miss Georgianna Stringfellow. I explained the whole thing to her. She thought it was a good idea but she said, "Where do I come in?" I said, "Now you know, Miss Stringfellow, we're not going to get all these people to come down out of the hills. They haven't been in Culpeper in the last twenty years, probably. What I want is for you to give me a block of Social Security numbers so that when they come in to work, we'll be able to give them their numbers and it'll all be legal and everything. "Well," she said, "I don't know. They're supposed to come in here and register. I don't know if I should do that or not. This is kind of irregular, Mr. Cruikshank." So I said, "Well, all right. Think it over." I knew I couldn't push her.

Then just as I was going out, her assistant, although she needed an assistant like a toad needs a vest pocket because she didn't have that much work, came out on the porch and said, "Mr. Cruikshank, let me ask you something. I heard what you were talking to Miss Stringfellow about and I think it's

a great idea. Did you ever play Michigan?" And I thought to myself, "Michigan, that's some kind of Seven-up. It's an old card game." I said, "I think maybe I did once or twice when I was in college or something but I've forgotten about it." She said, "Miss Stringellow loves to play Michigan. Where are you staying?" I said, "The Lord Culpeper Hotel." She said, "If you get an invitation, will you come over this evening and play Michigan?" I said, "Yes I will!" She said, "That's the way to get to Miss Stringellow."

I went back to the hotel and sure enough as I was finishing my dinner, there was a phone call and Miss Stringellow asked if I would come over and join in a hand of Michigan that evening. I went over and lost three or four dollars. I hung around the whole next day. It's not hard hanging around there, it's such beautiful country, you know. I went back the next night and I remember altogether I lost seven dollars which I never got back because I couldn't figure a way to put that seven dollars on my expense account. The next day, I came in and Miss Stringellow said, "How many numbers do you want?" and when I told her she gave them to me.

So I went and got ahold of my WPA friend and we got our maps and started out. We would find these chaps and tell 'em to report to pick-up points on the road the following Monday and we would have trucks bring them to work.

Monday morning I was there. I didn't know whether these guys would show up or not. The engineer Mosby kept saying, "Oh these hillbillies, they won't work. They don't know anything. They're lazy. They won't work." So I was very interested to see how it would come out. Pretty soon the trucks started rolling in and almost all of the mountaineers showed up.

I was tickled to death that my scheme was working, but then Mosby's clerk who also resisted the idea of the mountaineers working, came over and said, "I told you, Cruikshank, this wouldn't work." I said, "What's the matter now?" He said, "They all got the same name. How the hell are we gonna keep a payroll?" "Whaddaya mean, they all got the same name? That's impossible," I said. "Well," he said, "most of 'em they're named Nicholson."

Well, it came back to my mind that when I had been going around recruiting there had been a number of them that told me their name was Nicholson. The supervisor said, "They're all named Roy Nicholson. You can't keep a payroll like that. We'll all be in trouble. Send these guys home. They're no use." "Ah, come on," I said, "We've got around every problem up 'til now, this isn't impossible." "Well," he said, "you figure it out." And he stalked back into the little cabin which was his office.

So there were these men, all kind of sitting around, hungry-looking, beat-down guys, some of 'em were barefooted, hardly an overcoat in the crowd and it was a cold day. I got up on a crate or a stump and said, "Gentlemen, we got a problem. I don't know whether you ever worked for the government or for a contractor or anything, but you know, if you do, you have to keep payrolls. You understand what a payroll is?" And I saw about one

hundred and fifty blank expressions in front of me. "Well," I said, "you know when you work, you get paid by the hour and if one of you gentlemen was present and working and the other man couldn't work that day, it wouldn't be fair for both of you to get paid." Vigorous shaking of heads. They understood that. I then said, "Now I have been told that several of you are named Roy Nicholson, is that correct?" Several nodded their heads. I said, "Well, would all of the gentlemen here that are named Roy Nicholson just mind stepping forward a little bit, I want to talk to you." And about a dozen guys came up, a dozen or more. I said "Do you have a middle initial?" I got blank expressions. I explained that my middle initial was H and so forth. And they didn't, none of 'em seemed to have a middle initial. "Well," I said, "we can straighten this out. We can give you a middle initial right now." I picked out a likely looking mountaineer and I said, "Now you sir, as long as you're on the project here and you're working and you want to keep your time straight like I explained, do you mind if we call you Mr. Roy A. Nicholson?" He nodded his head and said, "Yes," that was all right. "Now," I said, "You go up to the clerk of the works there in that little office, you see, and tell him your name is Roy A. Nicholson." And picking out another, I said, "You sir, would you go up with your friend and when he's finished registering, you tell the clerk of the works that you're Roy B. Nicholson." I went on and as I recall, I got down to the N's or M's or somewhere in the middle of the alphabet. I gave them all middle initials. There were a couple of other names and there were Corbins and there were Adamses and a couple of others with the same name. I gave them middle initials also.

Then I went up to the clerk of works and I said, "You see if you want to put them to work, you can. There's always a way."

So, I was feeling pretty good and I thought I had solved that problem. But about a month later the payrolls came into my office at Raleigh and lo and behold this clerk had not shuffled the Social Security numbers and there was Roy A. Nicholson, number 125-10-5310, or something and Roy B. Nicholson, 125-10-5311, Roy C. Nicholson -1512 and so on.<sup>4</sup> Now if anything ever looked phony on a government payroll, that did. I knew there was nothing really illegal about 'em. I also knew that as chairman of this Watchdog Committee, Senator Byrd, because of his interest in this project, asked for everything about it to be brought to his attention and that somebody in his office would get brownie points by bringing this "phony" payroll to him. But there was no way out of it. So I just shut my eyes and signed approved, Nelson H. Cruikshank, on all of 'em. But the thing is, that to this day I never heard from Senator Byrd.<sup>5</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. Felix Brunner, "Utopia Unlimited," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 10, 1936.
2. *Congressional Record*, 75th Congress, 1st Session, 1937, p. 7966.
3. This is not quite correct. The mountain people also supplemented their income by selling dried apples from their own orchards, by making baskets and other mountain crafts for sale, by begging from visitors at the summer resort hotels, and by gathering chestnut bark from the dead trees to be sold to the tanneries.
4. These social security numbers are fictitious.
5. Cruikshank surmises that the reason he never heard from Senator Byrd might be that Byrd's old friend and political ally, Georgianna Stringfellow was also involved and would be in as much trouble as Cruikshank if Byrd brought the matter to Congressional investigation.

We thank Phillip Hastings, historian for the U.S. Government Park Service in Shenandoah National Park for access to park records.

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# I am a Part of the Parkway, and the Parkway is a Part of Me

by  
*Diane K. Gentry*

Most people view highways as cold, impersonal slabs of concrete built by strangers on noisy earthmoving machines. The majestic Blue Ridge Parkway, winding nearly 500 miles along mountaintops from Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, to Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina, is different. This park road, with its relaxing blue-velvet views of layers of foggy mountains, was launched as a Depression era make-work project in the 1930s to give proud, but poor and isolated, mountain men jobs. The Parkway was largely built by the men who lived beside it. In September 1935, when construction began, the world of the Blue Ridge opened up and lives began to change.

In September 1985, as the Parkway marks its 50th anniversary, it's time to celebrate this scenic engineering miracle in human terms through the words of the local people who helped build it, raised their families beside it and love it. These are the stories of the first construction crews, a CCC laborer, maintenance men, rangers and a superintendent, all Parkway retirees who shared the road's colorful beginnings and launched it into the present.

Leo Collins is a 6'5½" giant of a man with a big, open friendliness to match. Though he retired in 1983, after nearly 37 years on the Parkway, he was still a boy when his father's farm was split to make room for the new road. "People couldn't visualize a road cut through these mountains, but they were still excited," he remembers. "We were remote with only one paved road in the area. Tourism was unheard of before the Parkway. We didn't even get electricity here before 1946! There were small family farms, a few sawmills and loads of moonshine stills. Families gathered roots and herbs to sell—ginseng, wild cherry bark, May apples, sassafras, and galax. They'd bring them to the general store at Hare, a place named for all the rabbits trapped there."

Leo's father and brother eagerly joined landscaping and rock laying crews earning 25-30¢ an hour. "That was big money in the mountains in those days. The mud was so deep they couldn't get a wagon through to go to work so they walked four miles to the job and four miles home in all kinds of weather," Leo says.

Leo's career was quite a contrast. During his last eight years on the Parkway, he was in charge of all maintenance in North Carolina—262 miles. Many an 18-hour day he'd drive his territory round-trip, stopping along the way to check on his construction and maintenance crews. The Collinses

left their new home on the Glade Valley farm for 23 years to live nearer Parkway offices. "I don't regret a minute of it," he says. Retirement brought Leo back to his farm beside the Parkway where he grows exquisite Christmas trees and heads the Blue Ridge Parkway Alumni Association, a group of Parkway retirees he brought together. "We're a family connected by the Parkway," he explains. "We take a lot of pride in it. I am a part of the Parkway, and the Parkway is a part of me. I love it."

"The Parkway is beautiful because everyone took a real interest in their work and tried to do their very best," says Ralph Joines, 72, who built rock walls, overlooks, water fountains, and signs on the Parkway from the 1930's to 1973. He single-handedly built the pedestrian overlook at Alligator Back, cutting, fitting, and laying stone so people could enjoy the spectacular view.

In those early years, rock work was all done by hand. Take the 250-300-foot-long retaining wall Ralph and others built at the coffee shop in Doughton Park. "That was before the days of cranes," Ralph says. "We rolled big rocks on timbers, broke them to the right length with 18-pound sledge hammers, then used hand chisels to shape them. It was hard work. Since I retired, I like driving up on the Parkway and looking at all the things I built. I'm proud to have worked on the Parkway."

Ralph still lives in the old two-story farmhouse where he was born, on a 40-acre farm. "I'd get up at 5 a.m. to milk my eight cows by hand before breakfast. They'd always be on top of the mountain, so I'd have to climb up and get them. Then I'd walk three miles to Mahogany Rock on the Parkway to catch a truck to the construction site. I got a lot of exercise in those days."

Parkway planners carefully preserved hardy Appalachian lifestyles like Ralph's and those who went before him by saving cabins, homes, farms and a water-driven mill along its route. The 100-year-old Brinegar cabin in Doughton Park is a good example. "Caroline Joines Brinegar was my great aunt," Ralph says. "I spent many a day in that house. She was a fine weaver, and her husband made shoes for us and others. Daddy told me one pair had to last all winter. On the first day of May, I'd throw them away and go barefoot."

Another kind of lifestyle, filled with elegance and beauty, is preserved on the parkway near Blowing Rock, North Carolina. The 20-room Flat Top Manor, home of Moses Cone, the "Denim King" of the textile business, is now a distinctive mountain craft center on a 3600-acre estate. During their careers Leo and Ralph helped keep the lovely wooden turn-of-the-century mansion in good repair.

A grand old man of the Parkway, 81-year-old Clyde Downs, had a special reason for manicuring its grounds. "I grew up on the Cone place from the time I was five years old, lived there until 1951, and raised my four children there," the small, soft-spoken man says. "Daddy started working for the Cones in 1909. As a boy, I picked dandelions off the yard and hauled water to the apple pickers in the orchard for 3½¢ an hour, then stayed on to work for

Mrs. Cone until she died in 1947. There were 33 workers' houses on the place, each about one half acre so we could have a garden, a cow, some hogs, and chickens. It took at least 50 people to keep the place up with its apple orchards, gardens, carriage trails, lakes, and dairy. The Cones really loved the land and beautified it. They were always good to us. They'd give the men a suit of overalls and a denim jacket every Christmas and the children would always get a great big box of candy from Mrs. Cone. She was a pleasant-talking somebody, if you didn't get her crossed up. She didn't like fussing and quarreling. If someone started that, they'd be laid off. She wanted us to be one big family."

When the government took over the estate, naming it Moses H. Cone Memorial Park, Clyde joined the Parkway maintenance crew and worked for 30 years, retiring at age 78. Although he had other jobs along the Park-way, Clyde always kept the grounds around the mansion and the mountaintop cemetery where the Cones are buried mowed, trimmed, and immaculate. "I have a special warm spot down in my heart for that place," he admits.

Up the Parkway, past Flat Top Manor into Virginia, cows still graze behind well-maintained split rail fences because the park service had the foresight to lease some of the adjoining land it purchased back to the farmers for \$1 an acre a year. This perpetuated the farm scene so essential to the atmosphere on the gently rolling first sections of parkway.

One of the major differences between a parkway and a highway is that a much greater right-of-way must be acquired to assure a park-like atmosphere with minimum development. Most farmers sold their land willingly because as Ralph Joines puts it, "They could use the money much better than the land at that time." Records from the late 1920s show the average cash income from farms in the region was a whopping \$86 per year. But, not everyone was ready to sell. Mac Combs was part of a crew clearing the right-of-way in Virginia when he stumbled onto a cabin. When the door flew open, he looked down the barrel of a shotgun held by a mountain mother who wasn't ready to move her brood. The crew backed up slowly and continued clearing on the other side of the cabin until the sheriff evicted the family the next day.

"In those days, clearing the land was hand work," says Mac, 72. "We didn't have any chain saws back then, just cross-cut saws and axes. Men were everywhere cutting trees. We'd call to each other as one was about to fall. TIMBER! The woods would just ring."

"I've walked this Parkway from Deep Gap to the Virginia line, both sides of it backwards," laughs Fred Handy, a wiry, energetic 80-year-old farmer who spent 30 years working on the Parkway, ending up a foreman. "I staked off the right-of-way, driving stakes 15 feet apart. You have to stake off one side, then go up and bring the other side down; that's why I went backwards. It was a right smart job setting stakes in that rough country. We'd cut down

trees and eight or 10 of us would carry them out like pallbearers."

Fred and his wife farmed 90 acres in Glade Valley, North Carolina. "We raised wheat, hogs, cattle, a dairy herd, turkeys, and vegetables, but you couldn't make a profit farming. We sold our turkeys to pay our taxes, and the grocery store would carry us for a year before we'd have to pay up."

"People were so happy when they heard the Parkway was coming through. The Parkway made jobs where there were no jobs. It saved these little towns. I was happy to pull on heavy socks and gun boots up to my knees and walk four miles through the fields to work all year. I've cut ice out of the ditches so they could dig 'em."

For younger men like Vaughn Hendrix, who grew up two miles from the Parkway, four Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps were established along the route. "The CCC was for boys 18-20 like me who didn't have a job," Vaughn says. "This country was full of them. It was like being in the army. The barracks we lived in were shipped from Oklahoma wall by wall. We stood reveille every morning at 6 a.m., marching around with wooden rifles. They gave us a uniform, work clothes, a place to sleep and our eats. We earned \$30 a month, but \$12 of that had to be sent to our parents and \$6 a month went for laundry. It didn't leave us much."

But the CCC contributed much to the Parkway. "We cut out the picnic ground at Doughton Park and made the hiking trails, working six to eight hours a day. We didn't have any heavy equipment to cut trails through the woods, just saws and arms and elbows. I'm proud that in the CCC from 1938 to 1940, I helped build Doughton Park, then returned from 1962-1983 to help maintain it. The Parkway is the best thing that ever happened in this area."

Some of the Parkway had to be sliced through solid rock. "I helped do the drilling and blasting," says Ralph Joines. "For softer rock they used black powder, about as coarse as buckwheat, which they stored in metal kegs. They'd measure down and see what length hole they had, so they'd know how much powder to put in there to crack the rock enough for a shovel operator to get it out. Someone would yell 'FIRE IN THE HOLE!' three times, and we'd all run for cover."

Curtis Horton, now 73, ran every kind of heavy equipment they had, building four sections of parkway from 1935-1940. "We had pans, shovels, tractors, bulldozers, and motorgraders, all pretty primitive compared to what they use now. The cabs on the shovels were so big, they looked like small houses moving around. No one ever taught us how to run the equipment. I watched other people moving the levers and used my common sense. I was lucky. In all those years, I didn't even get a little finger broke."

"Them old tractors are awful mean in the steering. Normally you pull the right hand lever and it will go right, but coming downhill, it jumped out of gear and careened left down the side of the mountain. On the older tractors, you had to stick a crowbar down in the flywheel and pull it over

to crank it. Sometimes the thing would backfire and kick the crowbar plumb across the field. Then you'd have to go hunt it. Oh, they were a job to start."

According to Curtis, who made 45¢ an hour instead of the standard 30¢ for laborers (15¢ hazard pay, perhaps), getting the slopes started on top was the biggest challenge. "You had to work your way up the rock. Men had to tie themselves up with ropes and use jackhammers to chisel out a place wide enough for me to get the bulldozer across. If I hit anything like a rock, root or stump with the side of the blade, the bulldozer would spin and scoot right down the mountain. I never turned one over, but I came mighty close."

In the late 1930's, Granville Liles, now 71 and retired from a distinguished 37-year career with the park service, supervised 200 local men landscaping the raw banks and rough cuts left by construction. "We had a planting plan that would tell us where to seed, plant grass, open vistas at overlooks and plant shrubs." The native rhododendron, mountain laurel and flame azalea that paint the Parkway with colorful bloom every June didn't come from greenhouses. "We'd go into neighbors' fields and ask them if we could dig up their rhododendron," Granville says. "Fortunately, most farmers were delighted to get their pastures cleared, then we'd transplant. I guess we landscaped 40 miles in North Carolina without missing a day. We built a fire on the side of the road and continued planting all winter."

When handsome young Liles decided he wanted to be one of the Parkway's first rangers, he contrived a scheme to attract the attention of then assistant superintendent Sam Weems, a man both loved and feared. He blocked the Parkway with rails. "I knew Mr. Weems would be driving through that day and I didn't want to miss him." Weems was noticeably upset when his big government car skidded to an unexpected stop, but the enterprising Liles got the job.

Granville found being a ranger in the early history of the Parkway fascinating, often amusing and sometimes downright exasperating. "It's hard for people 45 years later to realize that the Blue Ridge Parkway opened up country which had been virtually inaccessible and often primitive. The first rangers were often involved in public relations work, educating the local people to the Parkway and its restrictions. There were so many traditions in the mountains we had to combat."

Moonshine stills were almost as common along the Parkway as pine trees. Once, when Granville was driving long-time Parkway superintendent Sam Weems on the Parkway to Laurel Springs, a small car raced by them at breakneck speed. "What are you trying to do, kill me?" Weems shouted, as Granville tore after it, bumping off a side road near Sheets Gap. He knew the car was full of liquor. After about a mile, the driver jumped out and ran into the woods, leaving behind a lifetime supply of moonshine. "You don't need all this for evidence, do you?" Weems asked, grinning.

Greenville chased many a moonshiner, cock fighter, and hunter off the

Parkway in his time. It was harder for him to explain to farmers that the Parkway's ban on all commercial vehicles also meant they couldn't haul their chickens to market, even if it was the only paved road in the county. It was a mountain tradition for farmers to burn their fields every Spring to kill the ticks, snakes, and red bugs and improve grazing. Forest fires blazed frequently and were very difficult to control. As the mountain people came to love and respect the Parkway, harmful traditions like burning died.

"I think the Parkway represents the highest quality of preservation I've seen," Granville says. "No road in this nation equals it in beauty. The local people have a love for the land that gives the Parkway a special quality."

Dean Richardson's first memory of the Parkway was from the bed of his granddaddy's pick-up. "As the Parkway came closer to our farm, we'd drive up there on Sundays to look at all the machines with wheels higher than our heads cutting a road through the mountains. It was exciting!" Dean has a superb view of the Parkway near Mahogany Rock from his farm near Sparta, North Carolina, which rises to the 4,000-foot elevation. His family has owned the land since before the Civil War. It's almost a spiritual experience walking over mountain meadows with Dean and his little dog, surrounded by his Black Angus cattle and listening to him talk about his love for the land and the Parkway.

"I've loved the Parkway since I was a kid. It's the views, the atmosphere, the people and the relationship the Parkway has always had with visitors and neighbors. My big excitement as a kid was seeing District Ranger Granville Liles drive through town in his ranger car with the big antenna and spotlight. One day Granville walked into the barber shop when I was sitting there. He looked so big and handsome with that uniform and tall ranger's hat. I decided then that I wanted to be a Parkway ranger for the dignity and excitement of it." Dean was a ranger for 36 years before his retirement in 1984. "I'll never forget my pride in dressing up in that uniform, putting on my badge and driving up the Parkway."

Dean was known for the extra effort he put into helping people on the Parkway, like peeling off his hat, shirt and tie one day to change the thermostat on a broken-down car. Or finding a man who had died of a heart attack on one of the trails, breaking the news to his wife, driving her to a motel, and notifying relatives for her. Dean is the kind of man people don't forget. He brought a special brand of sensitivity to the ranger's job.

"I'll never lose my excitement for the Parkway," Dean says. "Watching the sunsets heading south from Doughton Park in the evening, sunsets all the way back as far as you can see on the mountain ranges. Or the early morning fog that blanketed the valleys as I drove to work. Family reunions and Sunday school picnics in Doughton Park. Leaves changing color. Snow on the mountaintops. The Parkway leadership is to be praised for the way they preserved the land and the heritage of the mountain people."

After ranger and superintendent jobs at Mammoth Cave, Shenandoah,

Great Smokies, Death Valley, Yosemite, and Rocky Mountain national parks, Granville Liles came home to be superintendent of the Parkway from 1968 to 1975. He accomplished much during his leadership, like resolving the Grandfather Mountain right-of-way, the only missing link of the Parkway, which will be completed in the late 1980s. He also acquired the land for the Folk Art Center near Asheville, the center of mountain crafts on the Parkway. But environmentalist Liles' greatest gift to the Parkway was his push to purchase critical lands to minimize commercial development along the corridor of the Parkway.

In the 1930s, Parkway planners thought that the purchase of 100 acres a mile would be adequate to preserve natural beauty and scenic views. The area was so isolated that the land had little value. Land which sold for \$5-\$40 an acre during the Depression may now climb as high as \$20,000 an acre for a choice building lot overlooking the Parkway. No one in the '30s could visualize some modern American developers' greed to cash in on over 19 million Parkway tourists a year at the price of the landscape. At Mahogany Rock, one of the loveliest scenic overlooks on the Parkway, a developer had built an aerial tram. "We must have spent a million dollars to acquire Mahogany Rock land and eliminate that eyesore of a tram," Granville says. "We were fortunate to get the money to buy hundreds of parcels of critical lands to save the farm atmosphere so important to the beauty of the Parkway."

The Blue Ridge Parkway has a history of dedicated employees. Granville speaks of their "esprit de corps". "It's a high morale Park Service employees have when they work in these beautiful areas," he explains. "It gives you a sense of pride and a sense of protecting something extremely precious and valuable." Leo Collins and Dean Richardson simply call it "love". Beyond the Parkway's breathtaking views, there's the human element working behind the scenes building, preserving and protecting. It is the bond to the Parkway men like Granville, Leo, Dean, Ralph, Clyde, Mac, Fred, Vaughn, and Curtis share which has made the Parkway such a special place these 50 years.

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# The North Carolina Congressional Delegation and the Blue Ridge Parkway

by  
*Philip A. Grant, Jr.*

On March 4, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt was sworn in as the thirty-second President of the United States. Five days later the newly inaugurated Chief Executive summoned the Seventy-Third Congress into emergency session. Between the opening ceremonies on March 9, 1933 and the formal adjournment of the Seventy-Fourth Congress on June 20, 1936, The House of Representatives and United States Senate were to enact a substantial number and wide variety of significant laws. Many of these measures were designed to alleviate the acute sufferings caused by the Great Depression.

The foremost priorities of the first Roosevelt Administration included combatting unemployment and improving highway transportation. Congress eagerly cooperated with the President in these areas and approved an impressive array of landmark bills to effect relief and recovery. One of the most noteworthy developments of the years between 1933 and 1936 was the establishment of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Among the individuals vested with the responsibility of approving or rejecting Roosevelt's historic initiatives were the two United States Senators and eleven members of the House of Representatives from North Carolina. These gentlemen, like their colleagues from other parts of the nation, would cast votes on an exceptionally large number of bills and resolutions. Five of these congressional measures involved the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The origins of the Blue Ridge Parkway could be traced to the National Industrial Recovery Act. Signed into law by President Roosevelt at the White House on June 16, 1936, the National Industrial Recovery Act provided for a \$3,300,000,000 federal public works program. One of the key provisions of the statute was Section 205 (a), the text of which read as follows:

Not less than \$50,000,000 of the amount made available by this act shall be allotted for (a) national forest highways, (b) national forest roads, trails, bridges, and related projects, (c) national park roads and trails in national parks approved or authorized.<sup>1</sup>

The author of the National Industry Recovery Act was Democratic Representative Robert L. Doughton of Laurel Springs, North Carolina. Doughton, in March 1933, was beginning his twelfth of twenty-one terms on Capitol Hill and his first of eighteen years as Chairman of the prestigious Committee on Ways and Means. Doughton not only served as floor manager of the National Industrial Recovery Bill in the House chamber, but also as a leader of the conference committee reconciling the differences between the

House and Senate versions of the bill. The North Carolina congressional delegation supported the bill by a 10-0 majority.<sup>2</sup>

On December 5, 1933, the Public Works Administration (PWA), which had been established under the National Industrial Recovery Act, decided that \$4,000,000 would be set aside for the construction of a scenic highway between the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks. Two weeks later the decision of the Public Works Administraton was transmitted to the Director of the National Park Service, thereby according official sanction to the planning of the future Blue Ridge Parkway.<sup>3</sup>

One of the principal questions to be resolved was whether North Carolina or Tennessee would be the location of the southern portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway. On February 6, 1934, a delegation of distinguished North Carolinians testified before a federal hearing presided over by representatives of the Public Works Administration, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Public Roads. Strongly urging the North Carolina route for the parkway were United States Senators Josiah W. Bailey of Raleigh and Robert R. Reynolds of Asheville and Representatives Doughton Zebulon Weaver of Asheville, Albert L. Bulwinkle of Gastonia, Franklin W. Hancock, Jr. of Oxford, and William B. Umstead of Durham.<sup>4</sup>

On September 17, 1934, a second hearing was conducted in an auditorium of the Department of the Interior Building in Washington. Directing this hearing, at which spokesmen from North Carolina and Tennessee advanced their respective arguments on the route of the Blue Ridge Parkway, was Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. The North Carolina contingent at this hearing included Senators Bailey and Reynolds and Representative Doughton.<sup>5</sup>

Ickes finalized his decision on the Blue Ridge Parkway on November 10, 1934. Dispatching identical letters to the Governors of North Carolina and Tennessee, the Secretary concluded that the "decided weight of evidence is in favor of the so-called North Carolina route." The members of the North Carolina congressional delegation were obviously pleased with Ickes' decision.<sup>6</sup>

The second piece of legislation affecting the destiny of the Blue Ridge Parkway was the Federal Highway Act of 1934. This law went into operation on June 18, 1934, immediately after the President affixed his signature. Section 2 of the act was worded:

To further increase employment by providing for emergency construction of public highways and other related projects, there is hereby also authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$24,000,000...to be expended for the survey, construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of highways, roads, trails, bridges, and related projects in national parks and monuments, national forests....<sup>7</sup>

A highly respected North Carolina congressman who was conspicuously

involved in the deliberations over the Federal Highway Act of 1934 was Representative Lindsay C. Warren of Washington. Warren, a future Comptroller General of the United States, in 1934 was completing his fifth of eight terms in Congress. In his capacity as the ranking Democratic member of the House Committee on Roads, he helped produce the committee report advocating passage of the bill. Thereafter Warren would be appointed to the House-Senate conference committee having the task of refining the contents of the bill.<sup>8</sup>

Although a few Republicans voiced objections to certain features of the Highway Bill, it was virtually certain that the measure would pass the heavily Democratic House. A Republican motion to recommit the bill was rejected on a 257-85 roll call and minutes later the bill was approved 255-26. Consistent with their stand on the National Industrial Recovery Bill of the previous year, North Carolinians in the House were aligned 6-0 against recommittal and 5-0 in favor of passage.<sup>9</sup>

When the Seventy-Fourth Congress assembled in January 1935, there was a consensus within the ranks of House and Senate leaders that additional funds were desperately needed to mitigate the excesses of the Depression. The most important law approved by Congress during the ensuing months was the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of April 9, 1935. Especially relevant to the Blue Ridge Parkway was Section 12 of the act. It provided:

The Federal Emergency Administration in Public Works established under...the National Industrial Recovery Act is hereby continued until June 30, 1937, and is authorized to perform each of its functions under said Act and such functions under this joint resolution as may be authorized by the President. All sums appropriated to carry out the purposes of said Act shall be available until June 30, 1937....<sup>10</sup>

Serving on the Committee on Appropriations in 1935 was Representative Umstead. Umstead, later to be Governor and United States Senator from North Carolina, was one of the committee members endorsing the report on the Emergency Relief Appropriation Bill. Because of the extraordinary severity of the lingering economic crisis, few observers were surprised when the bill passed the House and Senate by the overwhelming majorities of 317-70 and 66-13 respectively. North Carolinians on Capitol Hill voted 12-0 in favor of the bill's enactment.<sup>11</sup>

Augmenting the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Federal Highway Act of 1934, and the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act of 1935, the Federal Highway Act of 1936, authorized additional money for the Blue Ridge Parkway. Section 5 of the act stipulated:

For the construction and maintenance of parkways, to give access to national parks and national monuments, or to become connecting sections of a national parkway plan, over lands to

which title has been transferred to the United States by the States or by private individuals, there is hereby authorized to be appropriated the sum of \$10,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1938, and \$10,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1939: *Provided*: That the location of such parkways upon public lands, national forests, or other federal reservations shall be determined by agreement between the department having jurisdiction over such lands and the National Park Service.<sup>12</sup>

As in 1934, Representative Warren was prominent among the congressmen who shaped both the committee report and the conference report on the Federal Highway Bill. The bill itself was not subjected to a serious challenge until the conference report was submitted to the entire House. Notwithstanding the criticisms levelled by several Republicans, the conference report was adopted on a 238-87 tabulation. Six North Carolinians cast affirmative votes, while not a single congressman from the Tarheel State was recorded in the negative.<sup>13</sup>

On April 24, 1936, Congressman Doughton introduced a bill providing for the administration and maintenance of the Blue Ridge Parkway by the Secretary of the Interior. On the following day the Doughton Bill was favorably reported by the Committee on Public Lands. Only one paragraph in length, the Doughton Bill proposed that

...all lands and easements conveyed or to be conveyed to the United States by the States of Virginia and North Carolina for the right-of-way for the projected parkway between the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountain National Parks, together with sites acquired or to be acquired for recreation areas in connection therewith, and a right-of-way of said parkway of a width sufficient to include the highway and all bridges, ditches, cuts, and falls appurtenant thereto, but not exceeding a maximum of two hundred feet through Government-owned lands as designated on maps, heretofore or hereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior, shall be known as the Blue Ridge Parkway and shall be administered and maintained by the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service....<sup>14</sup>

Securing recognition in the House chamber on June 20, 1936, Doughton offered a motion to suspend the rules and pass his bill to place the Blue Ridge Parkway under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior. Because of firm opposition both from Republicans and many Democrats from the populous states of the industrial northeast, it seemed doubtful whether the Doughton Bill could attract the support of the two-thirds majority required by the House rules. After the prescribed forty minutes of general debate, the House voted 175-125 to suspend the rules. Unfortunately, this majority was twenty-five votes short of the necessary two-thirds ratio the three hundred House members recorded in the tally.<sup>15</sup>

After experiencing the frustration of having his bill rejected, Doughton succeeded in persuading the Committee on Rules to recommend that his measure be approved by the House. According to House procedures, a resolution emanating from the Rules Committee needed only a simple majority for acceptance. The Rules Committee recommendation was adopted on a 146-139 tabulation, and minutes later the House passed the Doughton Bill by a margin of 145-131. The Senate thereupon approved the bill by voice vote, subsequent to which it was signed by the President.<sup>16</sup>

During the Second Administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the progress of the Blue Ridge Parkway was expedited by the annual bills funding the multitude of operations of the Department of the Interior. Indeed the “National Park Service” sections of the Department of the Interior Appropriation Act of 1937, 1938, 1939, and 1940 provided for an aggregate figure of \$17,500,000, reserved exclusively for the Blue Ridge and Natchez Trace Parkways.<sup>17</sup>

Determining appropriations for the Blue Ridge Parkway provoked controversy only in 1937. Congressman Doughton, convinced that additional federal money was needed for the parkway, on May 19, 1937 offered an amendment to the Department of the Interior Appropriation Bill. The Doughton Amendment proposed an increase from \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000 for the 1937 appropriation for the Blue Ridge and Natchez Trace Parkways. Strongly supported by Representatives Bulwinkle and Weaver, the Doughton Amendment was adopted on a 221-160 roll call. The North Carolina House delegation, which had been consistently sympathetic to the Blue Ridge Parkway, favored Doughton Amendment 11-0.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the New Deal era all thirteen North Carolina congressmen were Democrats. Only New York, Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, and Texas elected more Democrats to the House and Senate. New York, Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, and Ohio were, of course, substantially more populous than North Carolina and each of these states also elected a high proportion of Republicans to represent them on Capitol Hill. The sustained presence of thirteen North Carolina Democrats in the halls of Congress at least partially explained why the Blue Ridge Parkway was a key project in a Democratic Administration.

At the beginning of the New Deal, North Carolinians had an aggregate total of one hundred and twelve years of longevity in Congress. Four of these gentlemen, Senator Bailey and Representatives Doughton, Warren, and Edward W. Pou of Smithfield, chaired major standing committees between 1933 and 1940. North Carolina not only benefitted from the solidly partisan composition of its delegation, but also from the exceptional seniority accumulated by several of its congressmen.

Three North Carolina congressmen, Doughton, Bulwinkle, and Weaver, were the spokesmen for districts whose territory included the Blue Ridge Parkway, while Senator Reynolds was a resident of Asheville near the

Parkway's eventual southern terminus. Two others, Representatives Umstead and Hancock, were to seek election to statewide office and obviously wished to appeal to voters in the Blue Ridge Parkway counties and the nearby areas of western North Carolina.

Although the Blue Ridge Parkway was admittedly only one of many historic New Deal projects, it was destined to have a noteworthy impact on the future history of North Carolina. By their diligent efforts the North Carolina congressional delegation helped transform the Blue Ridge Parkway from a dream of a comparatively few number of individuals to a permanent reality for millions of Americans.

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# The Blue Ridge Parkway: Mileposts and More

by  
Pamela Frye

During the spring semester 1985, the members of the Appalachian Cultures class at Radford University, under the direction of Dr. Melinda Wagner, compiled a book about the Blue Ridge Parkway entitled *Mileposts and More*. The project was begun initially because of the class' interest in the Parkway, but when it was discovered that it was the Parkway's 50th Anniversary, it added an extra spark of interest to the work.

At the beginning of the semester, each member of the class chose a certain section of the Parkway which she would be responsible for researching and writing about. For example, several class members chose to cover the Parkway mile by mile, from milepost 0 to milepost 469. This information was compiled into the section appropriately titled "Mileposts...". Research on this section was aided greatly by William G. Lord's series of works on the Parkway. An example of the information found in this section is the entry for milepost 90.9, Bear Wallow Gap, elevation 2258:

The gap's name comes from the fact that bears come here in the summer to cool off by wallowing in the mud created by the spring located on the level northwest portion of the gap. This spring leaves the ground moist and muddy all year long. (p. 7)

In an effort to make the book as interesting as possible, only those mileposts which the class felt would be the most informative reading have been included.

While a great deal of the Parkway is covered briefly in the "Mileposts..." section, the class felt that more in-depth research should be conducted into the major attractions. The information collected on these attractions can be found in the section titled "...and More". Included in this section are articles on Mabry's Mill, Grandfather Mountain, Groundhog Mountain, and the Peaks of Otter. An article on the Carroll County Courthouse Tragedy includes a ballad about Claude Allen, one of the men involved in the infamous shoot-out:

Claude Allen was that tall and handsome,  
He still had hopes until the end,  
That he in some way or other,  
Escape his death from the Richmond Pen.

(p. 29)

There is also a story about Aunt Orlena Puckett, whose cabin is located along the Parkway. Included in this story is folklore concerning the birth of children:

If the number of creases in each of the infant's legs are the same, the next born will be girl.

If a baby's footprint is put in its first snow, croup will be warded off.  
(p. 27)

Also included in the "...and More" section are some articles of special interest. One is an article entitled "The Blue Ridge Parkway and Its Effects on the Local People". It discusses how the Parkway has affected some of the people of the Patrick-Floyd County areas of Virginia, and their feelings toward the Parkway. Included are interviews as well as some very interesting information about how the Parkway acquired some of its land in the early days.

Another article in this section deals with some of the more common flora found along the Parkway. It includes a brief description of the plants as well as medicinal and cooking uses for them. There are also two articles about the animal life on the Parkway. The first contains folklore about some of the more common animals:

A man with hair on his legs is considered a good hog raiser.

Keep your washpot upside down and the hawks will not bother your chickens.

Hang a black snake head down to assure rain in forty-eight hours.

If a spider is spinning a new web, count on fair weather.

(p. 35)

The second article is simply a listing of the most abundant and most frequently observed wild animals of the Blue Ridge region.

As the semester and the book finally began to draw to a close, the class felt that the project had been a worthwhile effort. They had produced a book that they could all be proud of and in the process, they had learned a great deal, not only about the Parkway, but about the environment, about Appalachian values, about people's attitude toward the land, and how these values and attitudes can be affected when they are faced with change.

Since the completion of *Mileposts and More*, members of the class have felt that several areas of the Parkway have not been covered quite as fully as they could have been, due to the semester time limit. So, during the fall semester 1985, two class members, Pamela Frye and Kimberly Burnette, will continue working on the book. In hopes of increasing their personal knowledge of the Parkway, this past summer Pamela and Kimberly drove the Parkway from milepost 167 at Rocky Knob to its end at milepost 469. During their trip, the girls collected information that they will add to the book, some of which is factual, some personal observations.

When work begins on the book this fall, more in-depth research and interviews will be conducted on topics already covered such as the flora and fauna and the folklore sections. Plans have also been made to include new

articles on topics such as fox hunting, crafts along the Parkway, ghost stories associated with the Parkway, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and government projects similar to the Parkway such as the Tennessee Valley Authority. There will also be additional photographs and drawings added to further enhance the visual appeal of the book. Once this work is finished, the book should then be complete and ready for publication.

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# The Early Days of Parkway Construction

by  
*Lester P. Lamm*

In observance of its 50th year, the Blue Ridge Parkway has been discussed and analyzed from many different points of view. We have reviewed the history of its philosophical, economic and legislative origins. We have paid tribute to the genius of those who conceived and formulated the principles which have so unerringly guided its development. We have acknowledged the resourcefulness and dedication of the designers, and builders whose patient and painstaking efforts over nearly two generations have created the unique gift, from and to the American people, which the Parkway has become. And we have touched on the face, the people, the history and culture of the land through which it passes, and its impact on and promise for that haunting and beautiful region.

Engineers are presumed to be practical and stolid people who do not generally wax lyrical about their assignments. Most engineers, in most assignments, live up to this image. But the Parkway, which has enthralled so many millions of its visitors, and inspired such devotion and loyalty among those who administer and maintain it, has equally worked its spell on many of the engineers, hard-bitten or otherwise, who have worked with their Park Service colleagues to bring it all about.

One engineer, a native of these mountains, has published books of photographs and poetry—at least as an engineer understands these things—about the Parkway, to which he devoted most of a long and successful career. Others, drawn to this work from distant points, found in the Parkway the final challenge of their professional lives, and in the Southern Appalachians, their final home.

For in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway, we of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA, but better known throughout most of the Parkway years as the Bureau of Public Roads) also mark the 50th anniversary of our association with the National Park Service in this great undertaking. In this endeavor, since its inception, we have been an essential, if junior, partner. The collaboration among professionals of the several disciplines involved has been so close, the bonds forged in the common effort so strong, and the dedication to a single objective so complete, that to separately evaluate the contribution of each Department to a given project would be very difficult.

The task has demanded and deserved the best efforts of both; and in such joint undertakings the lines of demarcation tend over the years to become blurred. So it is not so much the role of FHWA in this work that I want to review, but, rather, the challenges faced, the methods pursued and

the accomplishments achieved by all concerned. But I do need to say something about how and why we became involved at all.

The involvement of the FHWA with the Blue Ridge Parkway (in the time frame in which we speak, let's, for old times sake, just call it the Bureau) followed almost automatically from a 1926 "Memorandum of Agreement" between the Park Service and the Bureau, relating to the survey, design, construction and improvement of roads and trails in the National Parks and National Monuments. The engineering and technical support to the Park Service provided for in that agreement was given further definition, generally in the form which it retains to this day, in a memorandum from Thomas H. MacDonald, Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, dated January 22, 1934.

This memorandum reads, in part, as follows:

"A District Office is established at Washington to supervise the Park and Forest work of location, design and construction...in the East.

"The purposes are:....

"To establish suitable standards of location, design and construction for such highways in accordance with the topography and amount and nature of the traffic; and to provide suitable uniformity in standards and methods of construction.

"To provide an organization to undertake the location, design and construction of Park and Forest roads and such other highway work in the eastern section of the United States as may be entrusted to the Bureau.

"The District Office herein set up will immediately take over the direct supervision of all work contemplated or under way in eastern parks, including:

- National Capital Parks
- Colonial National Monument
- Shenandoah National Park
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- Acadia National Park

The proposed parkway connecting the Shenandoah National Park and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

This memorandum went on to appoint a director of the new organization as stated:

"Mr. H.J. Spelman is assigned as District Engineer in charge of the District Office...."

Thus was officially born the Eastern Forest and Park District of the Bureau of Public Roads, in turn designated District 15, Division 15, Region 15 for nearly two decades, and finally, now, the Eastern Direct Federal Division of the Federal Highway Administration.

First and foremost among the ten successive chiefs of this distinguished organization and longest in tenure of office (1934-1958), Mr. Spelman's picture precedes those of his nine talented successors on the walls of the FHWA's Arlington, Virginia office.

With the completion of the Skyline Drive, in the Shenandoah National Park, in sight, and recognizing that the development of the Blue Ridge Parkway would be a long and challenging undertaking, the Bureau's Luray office was relocated to Roanoke, Virginia, and assigned responsibility for the design and construction of the northern portion of the Parkway. The Bureau's office in Gatlinburg, Tennessee has assigned responsibility for the southern portion of the Parkway.

Reconnoitered and flagged by Bureau personnel in January 1934, the corridor for the Parkway was established, and immediately mapped by survey parties from the States of North Carolina and Virginia. From this data, the alignment was projected on survey maps by Bureau personnel, working closely with the Park Service. The final locations for the first projects were staked in 1934 and early 1935, and profile, cross-section, drainage and other data obtained from which to complete the contract plans for the initial projects.

Once the Parkway alignment was determined and design work started, the rights-of-way for the Parkway were acquired by the States of Virginia and North Carolina with State monies and donated to the Park Service with the understanding that the Federal Government would construct the Parkway. The right-of-way width varied from a minimum width of about 200 feet to several hundred feet, and averaged 125 acres per mile.

Design standards, developed for the Skyline Drive, were refined for the Blue Ridge Parkway to give the visitor a pleasant tour of the mountains and its culture and panoramic views of the valleys to the west and the Piedmont Region to the east. The basic concept was to provide a curvilinear alignment using spirals to transition from one curve to another and smooth vertical grades to provide maximum opportunity for scenic view yet minimize the impact on the terrain. The 45-mile per hour desired driving speed limited the horizontal curvature to about  $8^{\circ}$  curves although numerous exceptions were used to a maximum of  $25^{\circ}$  to match the terrain. In addition, vertical grades were limited to 8 percent with additional compensation (flattening) in horizontal curves to ensure that vehicles of the time could pull the grades without major problems. The cross-section was to be a 20-foot pavement with grass shoulders, 3 feet wide in cuts and 5 feet wide on fills. Again,

recognizing that the road would generally be a continuous curve in many areas, it was decided that curve widening to a 5-foot maximum additional width would be necessary to provide for a safe flow of traffic.

The geometrics, and pavement and roadbed widths selected were considered the minimum that would satisfy reasonable safety requirements. Even these standards were acceptable only because trucks would not be permitted on the Parkway. As time went on, it was apparent that many special design features would be needed to make the road fit the mountains. These included: hand laid and mortared rock embankments, stone masonry and other retaining walls, tunnels, and special bridge designs from simple stone masonry arches to the ultimate engineering challenge, the Linn Cove Viaduct. As usage grew, visitor facilities such as parking areas, campgrounds, and picnic areas were added to the designs. Features such as timber guiderail and stone masonry guardwalls were developed to maintain the natural appearance yet add the margin of safety necessary to meet the needs of users.

In the course of these early projects, the procedures, techniques, engineering and architectural standards were featured which have guided the Parkway designers and builders for the past 50 years. Initiatives and decisions arrived at by Abbott, Abbuehl, Weems and others from the Park Service, and by Spelman, Austin, Lee, Middleton, Woodrow, Geisler and others from the Bureau, have stood the test of time, and launched this enterprise on a clear and well-blazed path. Slowed or stimulated in turn by wars, economic crises or changing priorities, progress has never lagged for lack of leadership or direction.

With design concepts and contract plans proceeding at full speed and with \$16 million allocated for the construction through the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, it was time to meet the next challenge, that of actually building the Parkway. The first project, advertised in May 1935, was Project 2A1, for grading, drainage, and "traffic-bound crushed stone base," for 12.5 miles from the Virginia State line south to North Carolina Route 26 near Roaring Gap in Alleghany and Surry Counties, North Carolina, and passing through the area known as Cumberland Knob.

Bids for this first project were opened on June 12, 1935, and the contract was awarded to Nello L. Teer of Durham, North Carolina, who submitted the lowest of 10 bids in the amount of \$363,837.50, or about \$30,000 per mile of construction.

It is interesting to look at some of the prices in the tabulation of bids:

Unclassified excavation	\$ 0.29 cu. yd.
Excavation for structures	1.40 cu. yd.
Crushed stone	1.90 ton
Reinforcing steel	0.045 lb.
Stone masonry	12.50 cu. yd.
Concrete	22.00 cu. yd.

Today, we would expect prices for most of these items to be from ten

to fifteen times these amounts—for some items, much more. In fact, over \$30 million has been spent to close the final 7.5-mile gap at Grandfather Mountain or better than \$4 million per mile. By the same token, the vehicle the Parkway was built for only cost \$600 to \$800 in the 1930's but cost \$12,000 to \$15,000 today. As might be expected from these comparisons, estimates of the total Parkway cost have needed revision from time to time, although it remains one of the Nation's best bargains in terms of public works.

Following award of the first contract on June 18, the contractor began clearing operations at the beginning of the project on September 11, 1935, exactly 50 years ago. Thus began the long and difficult process which has brought us where we are today, with the end of the trail finally in sight.

It was not an easy process. The parkway was, by design, to be built in an area where roads were typically not built. It was an undertaking to provide scenic views and quiet pleasant wandering, rather than a transportation facility and, as such, the designs were laid ever so carefully in some of the most rugged terrain in the region. Except for crossing at the James, Roanoke, and French Broad Rivers, the Parkway stays in the clouds with elevations of 2,000 feet up to better than 5,000 feet at its high points near Mount Mitchell and on Pisgah Ridge in North Carolina. It was an engineering challenge not only to locate and design but also to construct. Working among boulder fields, streams and rivers, and on steep terrain, it was imperative that the delicacies of nature be preserved. The job was to make the road "fit" as though it belonged, as though it was a part of the mountain.

In the early days, the contracts provided for the maximum use of natural local materials. Stone masonry was used in lieu of concrete for almost all structures, more because it was economical and labor intensive rather than esthetic. Today, stone masonry is used for just the opposite reasons. Crushed stone for base material was quarried and crushed on the roadway, whereas today's modern processing and hauling equipment makes it more economical to purchase construction materials from commercial and manufactured sources. Even using local workers, the area was so remote that contractors had to set up camps—small self-sufficient villages—to keep workers close to the job site as compared to today's construction worker who typically drives 50 miles or more daily.

The beginning of the Parkway was a time when contracts were designed and awarded at an accelerating pace. Two additional projects in North Carolina and the first Virginia project, 8.5 miles from Jarmans Gap to Rockfish Gap, Project 1A1, were awarded in November 1935. This Virginia project started the Parkway southward from Milepost 0, the boundary of the Shenandoah National Park. Within 2 years, Bureau District Engineer H.J. Spelman, writing in the July 1936 issue of *Roads and Streets*, was able to report that 119 miles of grading and 14 bridges were under construction, at an estimated expenditure of some \$4.6 million. Mr. Spelman also reported that over 2,000 men were employed during May of 1936, and it was anticipated that that

number would exceed 2,500 at the peak of the construction season. Thus the economic benefits to a desperately impoverished region, one of the principal reasons for the Parkway's existence, were not long in making themselves felt.

The reports of those early projects and the recollections of the few remaining participants make it apparent that the design and construction processes have not greatly changed, at least in the essentials. Time has brought increases in both productivity and cost. While construction equipment has increased in capacity and productivity, there have been relatively few changes in type. Scrapers and front-end loaders quickly replaced the skip trucks, skips, and steam, air or gas powered shovels of the earliest days. More sophisticated compaction methods and equipment replaced the slower and more haphazard compaction derived from traffic. In more recent times, an improved road network throughout the region enabled the concrete transit-mix truck to replace the on-site one and two bag concrete mixers on virtually all work, however remote.

The Nation's entry into World War II brought park road and parkway construction to an abrupt halt; personnel and resources were diverted to more urgent needs. To this end, Project 2P1, a 7.9 mile, \$678,000, grading project from Balsam Gap to Bee Tree Gap in Buncombe County, North Carolina, was suspended in December 1941, on orders of the War Production Board, and remained suspended until 1946 when it was finally terminated. Leaving a minimum of Bureau and Park Service personnel to preserve the framework of the organization and to manage 3 camps of "conscientious objectors" to maintain the completed work, the resources of both Government and contractor forces were absorbed in the war effort. Many of those not going directly into military service were engaged in supporting efforts such as the Alcan highway, access roads to the tin mines of South America, Pentagon Road network, or military construction projects both at home and worldwide.

The economic effects of the relief program of the 30's, and the stimulus of mobilization and war production combined to reduce the justification and indeed, the need for massive public works.

Finally, with the war's end, the concerns of peacetime could be resumed, among them the construction of the Parkway. In the postwar years, new challenges, problems and priorities replaced some of the Nation's older concerns. Parkway construction, lacking the economic imperatives of the depression years, proceeded at a slower pace. When the war broke out, some 316 miles of Parkway had been graded; 43 bridges and 11 tunnels had been built. The substantial completion of over 300 miles of road in the 6-year period, 1935-1941, sharply contrasts the 40-year period following the war, which has been consumed for the completion of the remaining 170 miles, which underscores the change in pace, reflects the Nation's new priorities, and the effects of two subsequent major wars.

Nevertheless, in this period, some of the most critical, challenging and

expensive sections of the Parkway have been completed. The decade of the 50's saw the completion of the southern sections of the Parkway to its terminus at the Oconoluftee River in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, completion of the section near Boone and Blowing Rock, and the development of Price Lake.

By the mid 60's, the three major stream crossings—those of the James, Roanoke and French Broad Rivers, had been built. The important suburban bypass sections around Roanoke and Asheville were nearing completion, each involving many grade separations and several major viaducts. The remaining 15 tunnels, for a total of 26, were put in service. Except for a 7.5-mile gap on the southern flank of Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina, the Parkway was complete.

By 1970, we were well into the home stretch—closing the final gap on Grandfather Mountain. Interchanges at Beacon Heights to the south and Holloway Mountain Road to the north were nearing completion. Design studies were under way for the few remaining miles, in many ways the most difficult and controversial section of all. The gap has been slowly closing with alternating projects on the north and south. All that remains is the completion of six bridges between Linn Cove and Rough Ridge that are currently under construction, and a future contract for the final paving of the gap. The entire 470-mile Parkway is expected to be opened to the public by 1987.

In addition to its responsibilities as locators, designers and contract administrators, the Bureau also played two other important roles in the early days of the Parkway. Bureau personnel were contractors on 6 "force account" projects between 1939-1941. Providing its own men and equipment, the Bureau built several of the beautiful stone arch structures still in place. Among these stone arch structures is the longest on the Parkway, a 3-arch, 497-foot-long structure over Linville River and in North Carolina. The force account method became necessary when the intensive amount of work drove contract prices up to the point that these projects could be more economically built with Government forces. This did not, however, require the Bureau to go out and hire many people or buy much equipment because our other role at that time was Parkway maintenance. The Bureau maintained completed sections of the Parkway until they were surfaced, which, in some areas, did not occur until the late 1950's. Therefore, the Bureau had men and equipment experienced in construction and used them to the best advantage in helping to complete the Parkway.

Over the 50 years of development, the Parkway has generated interest throughout the construction world. While the motivator of the Parkway was to provide work for local people, contractors also saw the benefits of this major Public works project. Contractors from as near as Asheville, Roanoke and other Parkway towns to as far away as Colorado, Texas, Missouri, and Michigan, have constructed sections of the Parkway. In addition, most

of the stone masonry work has been done by skilled craftsmen from Spain and Italy, drawn to the region by the work, and still plying their craft today in the maintenance of the Parkway.

During the postward decades, the evolution of both technology and public attitudes had its impact on design and construction practices. Heightened concern for the environment, required some modification in the practices acceptable in simpler times. Yet environmental concerns were not new to the Parkway designer. As early as 1933, models were constructed to show the benefits of slope grading and landscaping to achieve the blend of roadway with terrain. Concern for air quality eliminated the burning of debris from clearing operations. Concern for water quality and erosion placed limits on the extent of open excavation. Silt fences, settling basins, berms, temporary seeding and other measures, together with monitoring of water quality in affected streams, became routine elements of every contract. Work limits were restricted and enforced, and operations in and near live streams were curtailed. Features to be preserved were flagged or fenced to place them clearly 'off-limits,' and more care went into mitigation of the visual impact of "scar" resulting from clearing and from cuts and fills.

Walls and bridges became more frequent alternatives to heavy grading in sensitive or particularly scenic areas. In fact, in the last 7.5 miles, engineers saw the need to build numerous walls ranging in height from a few feet to over 50 feet at Rough Ridge and constructed of concrete, rock filled gabion baskets, and modular walls, all economical methods of replacing the stone masonry walls of the past, or at least providing an economical support system for facing with stone masonry. In this same area, 10 bridges span ravines and small mountain streams to protect the natural surroundings. In at least five of these locations, original design concepts considered earthfills, some supported by retaining walls.

Throughout the 50 years of development, the essential steps in the preliminary engineering process and basic design standards governing the designs of Parkway projects have changed very little. It is a tribute to the competence and vision of the early planners and to the organizational and creative genius of such men as Abbott and Spelman that these policies have so well stood the test of time. In contrast, the engineering techniques and equipment by which these steps are accomplished have, in recent years, undergone rather startling changes. Developments in photogrammetry, optics, electronics and especially computer technology have had a revolutionary effect on the processes of mapping, surveying, locations, foundation investigations, and design. Region 15's highway and bridge engineers were quick to recognize and adapt to the new technology, the increase in productivity being such that the unit's staffing has declined from prewar peak of more than 1,000 employees, to the present level of less than 200.

From being, at its inception, one among several public works programs intended primarily for the relief of poverty and suffering in an area so remote

as to be virtually unknown except to its residents, the Parkway, by the 70's, had become a famous and well-loved National landmark, an economic mainstay of the region through which it passed, and a jealously guarded possession of a vigorous, unabashed and watchful public—why not—it's their road! But it meant that on Grandfather Mountain, we must proceed with caution. And so we are, under the skillful guidance and consent of Park Service landscape architects, and with the continuing coordination and advice of Bureau engineers, closing the final gap in a spectacular manner.

The problems presented by the terrain at Linn Cove gave the FHWA engineers and Park Service landscape architects a final challenge in completing the Parkway. The solution was the 1,243-foot long Linn Cove Viaduct. The structure, conceptualized in a motel in Boone, was designed to skim the boulders and float along the treetops to avoid disturbing the appearance and stability of the terrain. Built from the sky, it is made up of 153 individual pieces placed from above and, like the boulders it spans, no two are alike. It is, perhaps the most exciting single engineering feature of the Parkway, and the last major technical challenge to be met in completing the Parkway—in realizing the Dream. This structure accomplished the elegant closing of a challenging gap with its completion in 1983. It is fitting that this engineering accomplishment has received such wide recognition including eight professional awards, the most prestigious of which is the 1984 Presidential Award for Design Excellence.

Upon completion of the Parkway in 1987, the Park Service and the Bureau will have completed their mission, to connect the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Park with a quiet, leisurely motorway, free from distractions and dangers of the ordinary high speed highway. In doing so, 470 miles of road, 160 bridges, 26 tunnels and countless retaining walls will have been constructed through more than 260 contracts, at a cost of approximately \$130 million.

The construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway has provided one other important function for the Bureau. Over the fifty years it has been a training ground for nearly 200 of our 1,600 young engineer trainees. It has enhanced the formal education these young men and women brought to the Bureau and has provided lasting memories of professional and natural experiences. It has been the beginning of professional careers for some 25 engineers, who have moved on to high posts in the Bureau, engineers who would lack professionally if not for their experiences on the Parkway. I, being one, fondly remember my days at Bluff Mountain tunnel and the Tugle Gap Bridge. Even today, the Parkway continues its contribution as a training ground for two of our third generation of young highway and bridge engineers.

So, as the fifty years have passed, many engineers have served their apprenticeships on the Parkway and moved on to other responsibilities. Others stayed on—captivated by the challenge, or by the mountains, or by the excitement that comes from personal, creative efforts rewarded with visibly

beautiful and lasting results—something lamentably rare in the life of public servants, at least in such a literal and tangible sense. But for all whose good fortune it has been to participate, it has been a great adventure. An adventure both physical and intellectual; both professional and spiritual. It is very satisfying to contribute to a great public undertaking which has done so much benefit and so little harm; which has preserved so much, yet brought such profound change; which in creating a park reaching to the horizon, has exerted an influence far over the horizon. Which is both a bargain and a treasure we can leave to all Americans and to all generations.

# Early Appalachian Photographers

by  
Richard A. Straw

Southern Appalachia has been extremely fruitful ground in which hundreds of photographers in this century have found a rich source of inspiration for their art. Among the earliest regional photographers were Margaret Morley and William Barnhill. Morley's book, *The Carolina Mountains*, appeared in 1913 and though it contained only twenty-four photographs, her images chronicle the everyday lives of mountain people all over western North Carolina in an engaging and sensitive manner. Her best works show women doing the tasks that filled their days and defined their place in pre-industrial mountain society. Her photos are an open and deliberate attempt to capture what she believed to be the honesty and straightforwardness of life in the southern highlands that surround the Blue Ridge Parkway.

William Barnhill arrived in western North Carolina from Philadelphia in 1914 and immediately set out to record on film all aspects of mountain life in Madison and Buncombe counties. He was probably the first photographer to make pictures of mountain culture for his own enjoyment. He was independent and worked for no newspaper, no editor, nor did he have a studio of his own.<sup>1</sup> He was, in fact, something of a vagabond and he set out to photograph the region to satisfy his own curiosity and inner drive. For this he is certainly unique in the history of early Appalachian photography. His works are significant historical documents of Appalachian life in the early 20th century (although he did not mean for them to be) and are remarkable for their artistry and lack of bias or romanticism. What is especially amazing about his photos is that they were kept in private hands for over a half century until published in *American Heritage* and *Life* magazines in 1969 and 1970, respectively. The half century dormancy of Barnhill's photos removed them from the mainstream Appalachian image makers, such as Doris Ullman, who gained national recognition during the 1930s and who determined, for better or for worse, much of the country's preception for the region.

Margaret Warner Morley was born February 17, 1858 and lived for a decade after the publication of *The Carolina Mountains*.<sup>2</sup> She is not well known and, in fact, information on her life is scarce. She is best remembered for a long string of children's books on the lives of birds, insects, and small animals. *The Carolina Mountains* was her only major work for adults. Morley was born in Iowa but her family moved to Brooklyn, New York while she was young and it was in the East that she received her formal education. She was drawn to teaching and graduated from New York City Normal College in 1878. Her main interest was biology and she pursued that subject

at several different schools in Chicago and Massachusetts. It was in connection with data she prepared for her classes that Morley began to gather material for her books (17 in all). Her books had some pioneering importance because they came at a time when nature study was first established as a definite part of grade school courses. In addition to the specific information in them, her books offered important moral lessons to children about being kind to animals and conservation.

It is unknown exactly why she initially chose to go to western North Carolina but once she was there she was enthralled by the scenery and the environment, so much so that she spent part of each year for twelve years at the resort community of Tryon, south of Asheville. From her base there she explored the surrounding mountains and described them in lavish and loving detail. She also took some extraordinary photographs. Her photos show us a personal image of the mountain environment with little of the romantic influences that permeated her writing. Because she grew up and was educated in the 1870s and 1880s it is most likely that Morley came into contact and read the works of the local colorists who published stories about Appalachia in the popular magazines of the day. Perhaps this was the impetus which drove her to go to western North Carolina in the first place. It was the local colorists who created the notion that Appalachia was a strange land inhabited by a distinct and peculiar people who were unchanged from an earlier period of American history. The "static image" as Ron Eller calls it, had become accepted as fact by the 1890s when Morley first began to travel to Tryon.<sup>3</sup> Her prose is littered with the sentimentality and attachment to quaintness that characterized the local colorists' image of Appalachia but her photographs are remarkably devoid of these qualities. In them, neither she nor her audience are a part of the scene, and instead, the images she froze in time unfold before us without our interference or justification.

By the time Morley published her photos of railroads and economic development, an influx of northern missionaries and teachers had brought vast changes to the mountains. Obviously the image of mountain life that she presented was that of a passing and vanishing age. This provides a key to why she sought out scenes which depicted everyday life and the material aspect of the highlanders' world. She was comfortable writing about and photographing nature and, therefore, she sought in her photography to highlight the important relationship that existed in pre-industrial Appalachia between nature, home, and work. That fiber which held the fabric of this world together, the connection between land, home, and family is the dominant theme of her photos and suggests that she was at least suspicious of the changes that she could not help but witness around her. The old life of the high country was passing away, and she worked hardest with her photos to preserve that image. Her photos do not strike a condescending chord, rather they stand as documents and reflect the positive side of her perceptions. She did not have the painter's license to leave anything out of her

photos, and thus they do appear as clear evidence of pre-industrial reality even though they were obviously chosen to illustrate a text written by the same person who took the photographs. Morley was clearly an outsider and she was in the mountains to observe. She described in detailed photos the mountain peaks, the coves, the streams, the animals, and of course, the people. She liked the mountain people with whom she visited on her nature treks. They emerge from photographic work as neither pathetic nor heroic. Perhaps her awareness of change as a force in nature stimulated her to document a lifestyle as it had been during a time when land, family, and work intertwined in a stable, workable, and balanced society.

A contemporary of Morley's, although there is no evidence at present that they ever met, was William Augustus Barnhill. He was a free-spirited and adventurous individual who began vacationing in the South during the first decade of this century. In 1910 he decided he would like to move to western North Carolina; he began to correspond with the Secretary of the Asheville Board of Trade about the possibility of locating in that resort city. In 1913 Barnhill read Horace Kephart's book, *Our Southern Highlanders*, and was convinced that western Carolina was the place for him. He moved there in 1914 and spent the next three summers photographing the land and people within a twenty-five mile radius of Asheville. In 1917 he went off to World War I, returned to Asheville in 1918, and worked as a commercial photographer there until 1922 when he moved to Cleveland.<sup>4</sup>

Barnhill was quite taken by Kephart's descriptions and photos of mountain life, and when he moved to North Carolina, he went straight to Bryson City to meet Kephart and to show him some of his photos. Kephart was impressed and told Barnhill that he would use some of them in a future book on the mountains. Kephart died, however, before the book was written. Like Kephart, Barnhill was a dedicated hiker who backpacked with his camera into remote mountain areas. Barnhill's photos are striking representations of the texture of mountain life. They are sensible and believable and, like Morley's, are free of much bias and romanticism. His images are also primarily of people working: women churning butter, knitting, spinning, weaving, drying foods; men splitting shakes, plowing or hoeing corn. His photos are a splendid record of agricultural self-sufficiency in a time when one's ability to work the land defined the quality of life.

Many of Barnhill's photos are set on or around Mt. Mitchell. He made the first of many trips there in the summer of 1914 in the company of a party which included a motion picture photographer who was making publicity photos in the area.<sup>5</sup> In the summer of 1915, a party of newspaper editors who were attending a conference in Asheville were taken on a courtesy trip to Mt. Mitchell and again Barnhill went along. During this trip he took pictures of what he saw on the way and solicited orders from a sample album he had made previously along the railroad.<sup>6</sup> Barnhill had an entrepreneurial bent and did not pass up an opportunity to sell his photographs. It is curious

that he has stated in an interview that he was not aware of the historical value of his photographs until the 1950s but had he been, he probably would have sold them earlier.<sup>7</sup> When the Perley and Crockett Company of Black Mountain, North Carolina started an excursion trip over the logging railroad to Mt. Mitchell, Barnhill had a photographic concession, and he later shared a photographic and souvenir business with the owner of Camp Alice at the foot of the mountain.<sup>8</sup>

Barnhill spent days at a time hiking into the mountains around Asheville. His enormous curiosity drove him to record as much of what he saw as he could. His motivation, if we are to believe him, was simple. "I wanted to have a record of where I'd been to have something to talk about."<sup>9</sup> He won the confidence and friendship of the people with whom he came in contact and lived with them for short periods of time. He moved freely and obtained intimate photographic studies of their way of life. He photographed the people he met because, "I was as interesting to them as they were to me."<sup>10</sup> There is no evidence that Barnhill consciously attempted to alter the culture of the region or to present a specific image of it to the public. Unlike many photographers who would follow him, he did not select those images that fit with outside expectations of what "mountain people" were like. Instead, he sought to record what he saw around him because he was aware of its existence and he was somehow stimulated by its presence. "What I've seen there is just what I've seen with my own eyes," he has commented.<sup>11</sup> His photos are so important in this context because we are able to look at them without wondering about his intentions or for whom he worked. He did not even think of himself as a documentary photographer and has claimed that, "Documenting is the last thing I consider."<sup>12</sup> It is important, however, to view such disclaimers with some skepticism. Barnhill was far less manipulative than other Appalachian photographers, Doris Ullman for example, but the process of selection, arrangement, and timing is inseparable from the very act of looking through the camera and opening the shutter at some chosen moment. One can be totally unconscious or highly conscious of that process as one takes a picture, but it is there, nevertheless.<sup>13</sup>

Barnhill had no special interpretive message to convey through his images, although from the distance of time we are grateful for his meticulous attention to detail in people's lives. He stimulated others to document the region but he did not discuss his photography with them. He claims, "I wouldn't talk much that way, not that I had intentions of covering up, but I was just making pictures. That's what I wanted to do and that was my answer. My story was there."<sup>14</sup> The rare comment he has made about his work concerns his interest in process and design and how they operated in an orderly fashion in mountain society. He photographed the pottery works in the Beech Community of Madison County, for example, and he made a series of photos that show the process by which wool is worked into cloth. He sought in his images a natural composition which would illustrate

the essence of a moment suspended in time but not outside or removed from the system of which it was a part. His images are an artist's expression, not those of a cultural politician. His photos are, "what came out of me...what I saw."<sup>15</sup>

Like Morley, Barnhill photographed people engaged in all facets of work. He was particularly interested in what we now refer to as mountain crafts. He was, however, unaware of the intentional revival of certain crafts in Appalachia at that time, and he has said his only interest was his curiosity about how people "made every simply thing."<sup>16</sup> Neither did Barnhill attempt to make a statement about the changes that had altered tradition in the mountains nor did he use his photos to illustrate how people were losing the self-sufficiency that he so admired. He was, in his own words, "just photographing people."<sup>17</sup>

Barnhill's images can be classified into three styles: record photos; character photos; and process photos. The first type is simple the image of what happened before the eye of the photographer and he recorded it to capture a moment in time; the character study was the product of his interest in the different people he met and these photos resulted from his attraction to a particular face, the look in an eye, the turn of a head, or a certain nuance of appearance; the process photo captured what he saw as the organic design of life and he recorded the process because he admired its orderliness and function, not to document its existence. What Barnhill vigorously pursued was an accurate image of the people he met. He sought to portray their individuality, to know each one's different story, but not to lose sight of their place within the larger group. He is sensitive to the pitfalls of image making but believes that his early work was neither influenced by an awareness of nor an avoidance of Appalachian stereotypes.<sup>18</sup>

The result of this approach is that Barnhill's photos stand above later, and especially depression era photographers, because his photos have a candid, genuine look to them. Barnhill developed a relationship with his subjects that transcended the chance meeting and which was based on mutual curiosity, tempered with a straightforwardness, that each could respect of the other. Barnhill did not have to ask people to pose for him because he was so comfortable around them and they accepted him completely. He cannot remember anyone talking to him or asking him anything about what he was doing. No one questioned why he was taking their photos. He did not have to arrange for people to sit for him; and, in fact, he is adamant about how unposed his photos were. The photo of the women spinning, carding, and weaving is obviously an exception to this. Most of his photos have a spontaneity to them that suggests that he just happened to be someplace at the right time. For example, one of his photos is of a man salting sheep on Craggie Mountain. When he took that shot the man did not look at Barnhill or even bother to ask what he was doing.<sup>19</sup> To describe another of his photos Barnhill states, "I started setting up the camera and I don't

remember saying anything. And she didn't ask me anything."<sup>20</sup>

Now in order to fully understand the importance of historical photography it is necessary to ask certain questions. For example, what are our perceptions as viewers, and what were the motives and goals of the photographer? Photos clearly guide and fashion our most basic sense of reality and many of our most cherished images of the past have come from frozen pictorial descriptions more so than from the written word. "Photos are magical illusions, matchless pieces of information, descriptions of things, scenes, and persons infinitely more vivid than words...They seem miniature worlds, not copies but the things themselves."<sup>21</sup> Photos are certainly historical documents but they are also experiences in their own right because they give us the opportunity to witness the past as if it were, momentarily at least, present. The historian Michael Lesy pioneered the study of photos not simply as illustrations of history, but also as revealing documents and expressions that are a source of insight as well as information.<sup>22</sup> What makes this true is our ability to read the picture, to reconstruct some small drama before the taking of the photo that evokes more than meets the eye. The viewer defines to some extent what is depicted as reality in a photo through his own imagination and relates this to other images he has seen, and then he determines if the image is representative or fanciful. To the historian the most difficult task is to decide if a given photo is a fairly reliable image of what did exist. Would the photographed scene have taken place even if the camera had not been present? Documentary photographers have a great deal of power to manipulate a scene, but they are limited by their desire to show us what is there. It is because of this that the photographic image is the closest we can come to an objective representation of past reality.

Equally important is to know by what criteria the photographs were originally made. Both Morley and Barnhill photographed a place and time which was passing into history before them. They were both alien to their subject matter but were drawn to it either out of curiosity or to document it for outsiders. What Barnhill has said about his motives does not lead one to conclude that he consciously sought to help shape the image of what Appalachia was thought to be. Although a certain amount of scepticism is healthy concerning his motives and influences, the fact that over fifty years later his photos influence our image of what the region was like during the early 20th century is not equivalent to saying that he went there to intentionally reveal a particular image of the mountain people through his photography. He did, of course, do this through his conscious or unconscious choice of subjects and settings but what is crucial is whether he did this with the intent to change or present the culture according to his selective view.

Margaret Morley was in the mountains to study nature and to write a book about the region and its people and she took her photos to supplement her prose. Morley clearly tried to present an image of the mountains



by Margaret Morley



by William Barnhill

to the outside world, and her view was so popular that a copy of her book was for many years in each guest room of the Grove Park Inn of Asheville. What is fascinating about her choices is that she photographed images and scenes that are remarkably similar to Barnhill's. This suggests two possibilities. Either Morley and Barnhill shared a vision of the region which was already well established in the national mind or they both were drawn to those aspects of the region which appealed to their artists' imaginations and sensitivities. As is usually the case there was certainly some of each possibility behind their choices of people and places to photograph. Morley was influenced by the local colorists and Barnhill was enamored of Horace Kephart, both powerful influences. And yet they were also artists who were in a unique position to depict the people they met very nearly like they appeared to them.

Taken individually as a group what do the photos of Barnhill and Morley reveal to us about Appalachia? If we are to believe him, Barnhill did not consciously attempt to rearrange aspects of the culture for public consumption. Certainly his work was a forceful impact upon our perception of what Appalachia was like during the pre-industrial era and the image that is laid before our eyes does not conflict with our cherished notions of what Appalachian should look like at that time. Morley's photos certainly depicted what she wanted her readers to see as they read her book. But was she photographing selectively to present a pre-conceived image of the region that would support the assumptions popularized by the local color writers of her youth? Until we know more about her life we will not know. Taken separately from her prose, her photos, mostly middle distance and distant views, suggest that there was a unity to this life, that every event had its place in the overall scheme of things. This approach to photography gives a detached feeling as if one is viewing a drama unfolding. There is little suggestion that the people in her photos are posing for an audience. Most are off alone, apparently unconcerned with the photographer, without the sense that the intrusion of the camera has in any way altered their ordinary patterns of behavior.

In the end photographs, like any other historical document, exist in two worlds, that in which they were made and that in which they currently reside. But they cannot tell us everything regardless of how carefully the photographer sought to capture reality. They retain, as works of art, a precious amount of mystery that fires our imaginations, and as historical documents they stimulate us to learn more about the region so we can compare the visual image with the literary image. Fortunately Morley and Barnhill are two sympathetic and sensitive photographers whose lives and work are vital to understand what Appalachia has been and continues to be.

## NOTES

1. Sam Gray, "Mountains and Valleys and People in 'The Back of Beyond,'" *The Arts Journal* (Asheville, N.C.), February 1982, p. 3.
2. For general biographical data see, *New York Times*, February 15, 1923.
3. For a complete discussion of the static image and its impact on Appalachian history see, Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930*. (University of Tennessee Press, 1982), pp. xv-xxvii.
4. Asheville (N.C.) *Citizen-Times*, August 19, 1979.
5. Interview, William A. Barnhill by Polly Cheek, Richard Dillingham, Linda March, and Rob Amberg, Mars Hill, N.C., November 17, 1982, p. 41. Appalachian Room, Mars Hill College.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
7. Conversation by the author with Richard Dillingham, Mars Hill, N.C., January 25, 1985, author's notes.
8. Asheville (N.C.) *Citizen-Times*, August 19, 1979.
9. Interview, William A. Barnhill by Polly Cheek, et. al., p. 28.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
12. *Ibid.*
13. This idea was imparted to me in a letter from David Whisnant, April 19, 1985.
14. Interview, Barnhill by Cheek, p. 50.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
19. Interview, William A. Barnhill by Richard Dillingham, Mars Hill, N.C. August 24, 1983, p. 38. Mars Hill College Oral History Program, Mars Hill College Archives.
20. Interview, Barnhill by Cheek, et al., pp. 36-37.
21. Exhibitions Staff, *The American Image: Photographs from the National Archives, 1860-1960*. (National Archives and Records Service, 1979), p. ix.
22. One of several books which illustrates this concept is, Michael Lesy, *Bearing Witness: A Photographic Image of American Life*. (Pantheon, 1982).

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LITERARY AND FOLK CULTURE

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# The Road in Appalachian Lore and Literature

by  
H.R. Stoneback

I should say at the outset that I have my reservations about the term "Appalachian literature," that I share with James Still the feeling that such a term is "fairly restrictive." As Still says, "Southern literature is good enough for me." Yet, even if Appalachia, as Still suggests, is a "myth, an imaginary place," as well as a "legal myth" by virtue of the ARC definition, we are here today in what is legally Appalachia to celebrate the 50th anniversary of a splendid road which is part of what was originally conceived as the "Appalachian National Parkway." The fact that a goodly portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway lies outside the mythic or legalistic terrain of Appalachia leads me to feel free to cross the mythical boundaries between Appalachian and Southern literature.

One of the most memorable road images in all literature, and a touchstone for this meditation, is found in the opening paragraphs of Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*. Warren's "dazzling, slick" new highway may "hypnotize" you and kill you; but if you stay awake, "you'll go whipping on into the dazzle" and "way off ahead...the slab will glitter and gleam like water...You'll go whipping toward it, but it will always be ahead of you, that bright, flooded place, like a mirage." This celebrated passage, an emblem of the Fall, richly serves the purposes of the novel. For our purposes, it evokes the fall as well as the hypnotic dazzle of the road, the road which has led millions of Appalachian migrants away from the mountains toward the mirage of better lives, as well as the road which has seemed for half a century to be the public answer to the dilemmas of the region, the billions of dollars spent on dazzling roads which often connect nothing with nothing, which all too often lead nowhere.

Permit me to claim one more celebrated passage as a resonant road-sign. Anse Bundren, in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, has this to say about the road:

Durn that road...A-laying there, right up to my door, where every bad luck that comes and goes is bound to find it. I told Addie it want any luck living on a road when it come by here, and she said, for the world like a woman, "Get up and move, then." But I told her it want no luck in it, because the Lord put roads for travelling: why He laid them down flat on the earth. When He aims for something to be always a-moving, He makes it longways, like a road or a horse or a wagon, but when He aims

for something to stay put, he makes it up-and-down ways, like a tree or a man.

We might interrupt Anse to note that this is the passage which Faulkner identified as the “core image,” the seminal passage which generated the novel. Anse continues to berate the serpentine temptation of the road, which keeps “folks restless and wanting to get up and go somewhere else when He aimed for them to stay put like a tree or a stand of corn...if He’d a aimed for man to be always a-moving and going somewhere else, wouldn’t He a put him longways on his belly, like a snake?” For Anse Bundren, then, the road is a powerful disruptive force, the central thrust in the process of deracination. (It is perhaps necessary to remind students of Appalachia that this Mississippi voice is indeed Appalachian, that Faulkner’s Bundrens and scores of other vivid hill-people inhabit the mythic terrain as well as the legal boundaries of Appalachia).<sup>1</sup>

To stay for the moment with classic fiction, let us consider briefly the work of Elizabeth Madox Roberts. In *The Time Of Man*, concerned with Kentucky knob-dwellers on the borders of Appalachia, the road is a key symbol, for Roberts constructed the novel around the notion of the tenant farmer, who offers an apt symbol—as she noted in her journal—“for an Odyssy (sic) of man as a wanderer.”<sup>2</sup> The novel begins and ends on the road, and the thematic tension, the intricate prose rhythms and the deep form follow “the turning of the roads.” Baldly reduced to a sentence, the novel declares that “travelen the road is one o’nary life”; poised against this orneriness is Ellen Chesson’s enduring vision of home, place, community, as expressed in this magical sentence: “The farm was secure and the land was placed, all beautiful and near.”

Another Roberts work, *The Great Meadow*, would be my candidate for the finest novel of the Appalachian frontier. It is, in a sense, the primal road novel, for it is concerned with the movement from the Blue Ridge to Kentucky, following in Boone’s footsteps through the Gap, following the ur-highway of Appalachia, on a quest to make a home, to “make a world out of chaos” in Kentucky. Here is the dream of the frontier settlers:

A vision of stone walls and rail fences setting bounds to the land, making contentment and limitations for the mind to ease itself upon. The wearying infinitives of the wilderness come to an end...Through the farms run lanes and well pounded roads, making a further happiness, ways to go to meet a neighbor at his own house.

These pre-machine age roads are the roads of reasonableness and calm necessity, the roads which define rather than destroy place and community. In Roberts’ later fiction, the unreasonable roads enter the landscape. *Black is My Truelove’s Hair*, for example, is set in an “age of violence and disbelief...Age of fear and hurry...in this new-fangled world of hard, shallow things.” Dena James, the novel’s central figure, seeks to be healed through earth, “the

ancient oracle," after she has been the victim of a short but burlal love affair with — of course — a truck driver. The road is even more fundamental in the story, "On the Mountainside." "Hit's a moven age," the displaced old mountain man declares, and the road has led him to "be-nasty" his feet with the dirt of the settlements and the minds. He now knows, as he tells the downbound young man caught in the same mobility: "I was a plumb traitor to my God when I left the mountains..."

In the domain of the very best mountain fiction, I cannot help but hear voices reverberating from James Still's *River of Earth*. Even though there are few roads, except for those which follow the creekbeds, the mobility-deracination paradigm provides the design. Mother dreams of "a place certain and enduring"; she knows that "moving is an abomination"; she detests "forever moving yon and back" and asks "Where air we expecting to draw up to?" Father, with no will to farm, believes there's a mine working somewhere and follows the rough roads to the next coal-camp. And the haunting figure of Walking John Gay, symbol of a deeper restlessness, casts his long shadow over the hills. "Where air ye forever going?" Uncle Jolly asks Walking John Gay. Uncle Jolly, who has made up his mind to settle and farm, declares at the end that the Baldridges are "a pack o' Walking John Gays, allus a-going." Retain the design of *River of Earth*, add fifty years and billions of dollars worth of highways, and father is in Detroit or Chicago, mother is still dreaming of a "place certain and enduring", and just about everybody else is in the pack of Riding John Gays. And the preacher's voice, Brother Sim Mobberly's urgent inquiry and lament, echoes down the hills: "Oh, my children, where air we going on this mighty river of earth...?"

I must confess to feeling some discomfort with the inventory format that my topic seems to demand. It is more properly the subject for a book. Such a book would have chapters dealing with the early local colorists and their insistent images of mountain isolation, which set the stage for the later orgy of roadbuilding, migration, and mobility. It would also have a chapter on those later writers, a cut above the local colorists, perhaps, but aesthetically uneven and more narrowly regional—or provincial—than a Faulkner, Roberts, or Still.

One work that might be discussed under this rubric is Dubose Heyward's *Angel*, which has at its center the road as a symbol of evil, the emblem of "a devastating civilization." Hardly a successful novel, *Angel* is, however, an exemplary instance of road imagery in Appalachian fiction. Heyward renders his mountain world, for the most part with wearisome Murfree-esque imagery, replete with "mountain glory" set-pieces; his theme, familiar enough, seems to be that the last frontier and our contemporary pioneers—"the ultimate rampart of a tottering, primitive world"—are under assault by the machine age. First the railroad, then the highway penetrate *Angel's* "primitive world", and as inevitably as in a country song, she becomes a fallen angel, falling from the mountains into town, to the accompaniment of the

“possessive roar” of the railroad and the “infernal din” of the “rickety machine”—the automobile. In the archetypal machine-in-the-garden pattern, Appalachian and American, the valley is “doomed to prosperity”, a dam forms a resort lake, a pretentious hotel is built to accommodate gaudy outlander tourists, and billboards sprout everywhere on the “road (which) blossomed evilly into a main street with a cinema palace and many hideous and ill-assorted business buildings.” Worse yet, an evilly burgeoning highway approaches the town. With the highway comes the “year of great drought” and the consummation of Heyward’s rather obvious waste-land design. However, certain unresolved—or uncontrolled—ironies lurk at the heart of the work. Angel’s true-love, Buck, comes back from lowland exile as a member of the prison gang building the new highway. Buck, who was the prototypal proud and independent moonshiner, is now the reformed and educated prison trustee, whose speech has lost its mountain flavor. Moreover, as he explains to Angel, he’s a “good road man now.” In short, Buck is pardoned, and as the “din of the road builders” dies away the rains come to the waste-land and the lovers are reunited. Angel has insisted to the end on her desire to live in her beloved mountains but she goes off to the flatlands with Buck, who has been promised a job—what else but driving a truck in Raleigh. (*Sic transit gloria montani.*)

Similar images of the road pervade mountain novels but the resolutions of the pattern differ. The mountain world of Waits Lowe, in Maristan Chapman’s *The Happy Mountain*, is interlaced with hill paths and lanes, the comfortable “walkable ways”. These hills are not yet under assault by the machine age, but Waits, the “wild-wandery” main character, is restless to see the world beyond the mountains. He sets off eagerly and after various encounters—with a car that almost runs him off the road, with a filthy hobo who serves to suggest the consequences of perpetual mobility—Waits makes it to the flatland city. After an initial phase of commingled confusion and curiosity, the city reveals itself to Waits as an incoherent place, indifferent and boring—“all worn down alike”, he says of it, unlike the “separateness” of the hills. The city streets seem endless in their deadening similitude. Waits concludes: “These hard roads don’t pleasure my feet any.” Thus he makes his way back to the happy mountain, where his true-love Dena awaits his return. He has quenched his thirst for the road, learned that “the other end of the world” is most likely to be found “right by the stepstone of your own house.”

It seems to me that these two somewhat flawed and sentimental novels suggest the fundamental patterns of a century of mountain fiction: the roads come to the hills, bringing the machine to the garden, and the mountain autochthons either lose their Eden as they go down the deracinated road to the flatland cities or they experience a more fortunate fall and return to the mountains to reclaim the garden. Scores of works play variations on these themes. There is ambivalence in most of the works, unresolved tension resulting perhaps from an uneasy (or unconscious) gnostic embrace of

the myth of progress—and the road, the highway, is the primary artery of gnosticism—in combination with a sentimental sense of loss, a nostalgic longing for mountain springs and streams and hollows and log cabins in an unravaged Arcadia. All of this, a century of Appalachian mythology, amounts to a formidable burden for contemporary Appalachian writers. Although there is no space here to discuss today's writers, it is perhaps necessary to declare that their mountain roads are the same though they negotiate the curves with greater skill. Quaintness-mongering is finished. Picnic regionalism is dead. The missionary-settlement school syndrome is cured, and its equally fuzzy and bemused opposite number, then activist-authenticity syndrome shows signs of abatement. If there is such a thing as "the Appalachian writer" then there are many good ones today. They may fear that, like the speaker in Jim Wayne Miller's "Going South", they "will probably die/in a long line of traffic"; still, like Gurney Norman's D.R., they are probably on the road home, to reclaim the stripped land, to resist and to create in the bright particularity of place.

"At least the highways make it somewhat easier for people to abandon the area."

*The New York Times*, August 11, 1985.

I will now invoke the word "lore" in my title in order to say a few words about images of the road in non-fiction, in essays, oral history, autobiography and song. I do not intend to suggest any formal sense of "lore", as in folklore; I mean simply accumulated knowledge, facts, beliefs. And since we are talking about road-lore, it pleases me to note the Indo-European root of *lore*: *leis-*, track, furrow, footprint, etc.

By and large, writers of non-fiction concerned with Appalachia have been more generous in their attitude toward roads. Many have seen roads as the most urgent necessity, the great blessing making possible advances in medical care, educational and economic opportunities. Mary Breckinridge, for example, writes in *Wide Neighborhoods* that the "coming of the highways" has brought "the great blessings of electricity." (She includes the telephone as "another blessing of civilization". I must confess I have a difficult time finding the area code for blessedness on my telephone, which is usually turned off). In one of the oral histories in *Our Appalachia*, a "mountain missionary", Sam Vandermeer, recollects his persistent efforts to get roads in the Buckhorn area. He recalls the triumph of getting a gravel road and remembers vividly the "thrill of riding over some blacktop". The recently published autobiography of G. C. Jones yields one of the most illuminating accounts of roads and roadlessness in all Appalachian lore. The evocation of wagoneering in the Kentucky mountains, hauling wagonloads of supplies and shine up Pine Mountain, is vivid and concrete and worth dozens of Kentucky local color

novels. Is it ironic or inevitable that the young man who is an expert with wagons and mules and rough roads grows up to be a handler of heavy machinery, a master hand at mining, blasting, drilling and road-building? Towards the end of his narrative, he writes with obvious pride of his career as road-builder:

New highways were replacing the dangerous narrow trails and gravel roads throughout the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, blasting the mountains down to near the level of the valleys...I decided I'd had enough coal mining, and hired on with the drilling and blasting crew...I was soon put in charge of the surface blasting of the largest mountain that had ever been moved for the construction of a road.

*Growing Up Hard in Harlan County*, then, is a most instructive chapter in the Great Book of Appalachia: the self-reliant mountain boy, the hardy rural teamster, grows up to move the mountains he loves, to make the roads out, to leave the mountains, and now, retired in Florida, to write about them. As the bold-text caption in the recent *New York Times* (Aug. 18, 1985) review of this book suggests, perhaps Red Jones is the archetypal "Appalachian Warrior."

Another engaged observer of the region, John F. Day, offered fresh insights on the effects of roads some forty years ago in *Bloody Ground*. One of Day's most memorable sketches, "Jacks in a Jenny-Barn," begins as follows: "Highways linking the county seats and byways jutting a few miles up the hollows have brought a degree of modernization to eastern Kentucky, but they also have brought road-houses." And with the roads and road-houses, Day stresses, have come greater scope for drinking, cheating, brawling, and a general decline of morals, manners, and tradition. Day records this talk with a mountain woman:

"My ole man gives me hell all th' time fer runnin around,  
but I wanna have some fun. Ain't nuthin' up there in that holler.  
Till two years ago you couldn't even git up there—except walkin'..."  
"...Roads surely have made a difference."

"You betcha they've made a diff'rence. Least you can find  
something' to do now. Let's have another drink. I feel like howlin'."

The sacramental center of the road-house is, of course, the jukebox. Appropriately, the sketch ends with slugging, knifing and shooting over somebody's song selection. And, as a footnote for songcatchers and folklorists, Day reminds us that "You Are My Sunshine" has replaced "Barbara Allen."

Yet Harry M. Caudill, in his Afterword to Day's *Bloody Ground*, comments on the role of roads in the region's "progress," in ending "the old cloying isolation and insularity." He also observes: "New roads were built to bring tourists and 'industrial diversification.' Instead they gave rise to new coal mines and countless coal trucks." In various places Caudill has commented on the linkage of better roads and progress. Yet at the same time he sees

clearly that mountain people "had caught the highway fever" as long ago as the 1920s. In the preface to *The Mountain the Miner and the Lord* he reminds us that "roads went up the creeks and hollows, and the isolated and land-locked became mobile. Schools were consolidated, and the precinct and community lost importance...the new mountaineer became, in the main, a rootless individual cut off from his cultural origins, his beginnings, his heritage." As Caudill has it, "peripatetic mobility" is one of the "principal deculturing influences that have ravaged the mores of the central Appalachians." Certainly this is generally true in *American* experiences, yet it does seem especially and intensely so for the Appalachian experience.

Just a few weeks ago, a lead story appeared in the Sunday Times (August 11, 1985) by Ben A. Franklin, under the headline: "Despite 20 Years of Federal Aid, Poverty Still Reigns in Appalachia." The piece begins: "Logan, W. Va.—A new concrete highway near here, Appalachian Corridor G, curves smoothly through wide, newly blasted granite canyons and soars over resculpted green mountains. But then, repeatedly, barricades appear, and the concrete ends." The article rehearses the familiar facts concerning the aid programs. Most striking, however, is the emblematic use of the highway, the unfinished Appalachian Corridor G—(There is something terrifying about that name)—which serves to represent the billions of dollars worth of mountain roads built in the last twenty years. Accompanying the article is a photograph of a coal truck on the new highway, approaching a sign which reads: "Freeway Ends ½ Mile." In the key quotation concerning the present role of highways Professor William Miernyk of West Virginia University is reported to have said: "At least the highways make it somewhat easier for people to abandon the area." The old French proverb says: "In the beginning was the road." Will the new Appalachian proverb lament: "In the end there was nothing but roads"?

"Almost heaven, West Virginia...  
Take me home, country roads."

Since we've been on the road here a long time, and the freeway is about to end, allow me to shift down and talk for a moment about roads and songs, since more often than not the most popular songs in the mountains seem to talk about roads, roads that lead away from home and roads that lead back home. I will speak not as a professor of folksong but as a country singer these past thirty years.

A century ago they were singing about roads and rambling: Lord Lovel was still telling Lady Nancy Bell that he was a-going "strange countries for to see," and the true-lover was still saying "I'll be back again,/If I go ten thousand mile." These timeless, placeless road songs were not narratives and laments of migration. Since the 1920s, however, since the last milk-white steed was traded in for a Model A Ford and the old songs faded away, most road songs have as their basic premise migration, deracination and the heart's

unfulfilled desire to go home. The fathers of my generation of country singers rambled a good deal with Jimmie Rodgers, and some of them did some "Hard Travelling" in the Guthrie-Depression mode. Many of them were "going down the road feeling bad." But in the 30s and 40s most of them were already singing from the sentimental stance of out-migration and deracination: "Carry Me Back to the Mountains," "Kentucky I'll Be Returning Soon," "Take Me Back to Renfro Valley," and "Oh I want to wander back to the cabin on the hill." And, of course, that "silver-haired daddy" was always "waiting in a vine-covered shake in the mountains," if you could just get back home without having a "wreck on the highway."

Then the 50s and 60s came and it was our turn: we began by singing "Ramblin' Man" with Hank Williams and soon it was "Gotta Travel On"; then we were all in "Detroit city" singing "I wanna go home." These were the songs we sang, and hundreds more like them, in a thousand hill-country road-houses, in a thousand bars on lonely city streets. And, too, some of us sang with Dylan—"I'm going down that long, lonesome road, babe/ Where I'm bound I can't tell"—or chanted about how it felt to be a rolling stone. Some of us sang along with my old Nashville friend and neighbor, Billy Edd Wheeler, about the "Coal Tattoo"—"Travelling down that coaltown road / Goodbye...I'm leaving you behind." Or we sang with Tom T. Hall, my wife' childhood neighbor, about a mountain "Homecoming," a brief poignant visit from "the road" with the remnants of the family. And even though we were married and had kids, we were still singing (and believing) with Merle Haggard: "Down every road there's always one more city...the highway is my home."

By the mid-70s, however, we were all settling down, wherever we were, and trying to write quiet songs about home. One of the biggest hit tunes captured the mood of the period: "Take Me Home, Country Roads." It is useful to remind ourselves that this immensely popular song is built around stock images of the Appalachian myth—"life is old there," "moonshine," etc.—and that the Blue Ridge and West Virginia serve as general American touchstones for the vision of "country roads" and "home." (Incidentally, the songwriters had never been to West Virginia).

On a 1984 concert tour of many cities of China, the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France and Ireland, we—and here I drop the communal "we" employed above—found that the most requested song everywhere was "Take Me Home, Country Roads."<sup>3</sup> Everybody, from Peking to Leningrad, from Prague to Dublin, wants to come home to West Virginia. But no, it's not West Virginia they want to come home to on that country road (and if they did would they believe what they saw?) It's the deeper resonance of the Appalachian myth they sing about. Not even that, exactly, for Appalachian mythology means nothing to them. Rather—and we here in the Appalachian world need to be more aware of this—it is the larger myth, the ancient, forever new and universal Arcadian mountain myth

they long to come home to: In Peking, they may have been singing of country roads to the hills of West Hunan, where the Miao minorities have held fast to their mountains and time and tradition, resisting for centuries the aggressive imperialism and gnostic assault on custom and culture emanating from the Northeast; in Leningrad, perhaps, they were singing about dispossessed hill-towns in the Ukraine; in Poland, they were chanting the song of the high Tatras, where resistance is still a man's lot and portion and joy; in Czechoslovakia, they were dreaming of the enslaved and exploited hills and hollows of the Bohemian Highlands; in Dublin they longed to go to the abandoned mountains of Connemara, or to rest under the green flank of Ben Bulben. All over the world, the ancient hill-country myth recurs and reawakens in song and story, suggesting a new solidarity, the solidarity of the intensely local, the solidarity of the single, separate road or creekbed, the single, separate hill and hollow, the blazing particularity of the *deus loci* in each place. These are the country roads that will take us truly home.

"You know my interest and belief in this project."  
Franklin D. Roosevelt  
to Harold L. Ickes (Feb. 10, 1936),  
re: the "Appalachian National Parkway"

It seems, then, that most of our Appalachian writers and singers have not had much good to say or sing about roads and highways; more often than not, the road symbolizes all the forces which destroy a sense of place, past, and community. Moreover, the roads devastate the land. John Robinson, in *Highways and Our Environment*, places our roads very high on the list of "ecological sicknesses," accuses our road-builders of "monumental sins" against the countryside. Lewis Mumford, in *The Highway and the City*, warned in 1958 that "the American has sacrificed his life" and his freedom to the "religion of the motorcar." Highway building, he says, often has the same effect on man and nature "as the passage of a tornado or the blast of an atom bomb." "Our age," he fears, "will be known to the future historian as the age of the bulldozer and the exterminator." All of these comments are apt, I think, in the general American sense as in the particular Appalachian sense.

Lest I appear guilty of bad form, reporting all these unpleasant things about roads to a group gathered to celebrate the golden anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway, let me hasten to say that the Parkway is an exception to all this. It is, in fact, not a road or highway at all, but as *Collier's Encyclopedia* puts it: "a long narrow park...for leisurely travel." As Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes stressed in 1936 the point of the Parkway is to protect the traveller "from the dangers, annoyances and ugliness of the usual highway." Since I have already spoken too long here, as literary

critic and country singer, I will not adopt the guise of historian of the Parkway or Roosevelt's road-building policies. Yet, after one Roosevelt scholar told me casually—"Oh, the Blue Ridge Parkway was just another CCC make-work project". I was compelled to spend long hours with Roosevelt's papers at the Presidential Library and I thought I should report what may not be generally known—to wit, Roosevelt had a deep and enduring interest in the Parkway, which he envisioned as the nucleus of an "Appalachian National Parkway" to run from the Canadian border to north Georgia. In a confidential memorandum to Ickes he argued for the mountain ridge route, as opposed to the "so-called Metropolitan Route," and he made precise suggestions as to the route. He headed this statement with these words: "You know my interest and belief in this project." It would seem that FDR had a vision of another kind of road, a country road that might take us home, not just to the disappearing "scenic wealth" of the eastern U.S., but home to a sense of history, home to rumors and echoes of the Appalachian myth, the frontier sturdiness that the country so badly needed in the depression, in the lengthening shadows of world war.

If, as my grandfather used to say, you will permit me to be personal, I will close with a reminiscence of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Some twenty-five years ago I was drifting around the mountains of Virginia, hitchhiking with a friend. As the phrase goes, we were "on the road," and a charitable observer might say we were wandering troubadours. We picked guitar and sang everywhere, trading songs for meals, drinks and places to sleep. One of the roads we walked was a stretch of the Blue Ridge Parkway, not far from Lexington, Virginia. We slept in an old log barn one night. We didn't cover much of the Parkway then, because the hitchhiking was not so good, and there were no audiences for our songs. I'd forgotten all this until I was reminded of it by a song I heard on the radio the other day, on the way back from reading the Roosevelt papers concerning the Parkway. The name of the song is "Stoney," a classic "road" story-song which was a moderate country-folk hit some years ago. It was written and sung by my old road buddy, who went on to celebrity as Jerry Jeff Walker, singer-composer of "Bo Jangles" and scores of other songs. In the ballad "Stoney" he recalls our old days on the road, in particular the roads of the Blue Ridge and—for a pieceways at least—the Parkway. As he sang—"we were that free then/ just walking down the road/ and never really carin'/ where the highway goes"—I was haunted by an elusive image of the Parkway which I hadn't seen for a quarter of a century, which was for me an unfinished road, and forever just that kind of road where you felt free, where you didn't have to care where it went or how fast you got there. So now, on the 50th anniversary of the Parkway, and the 25th anniversary of my drifting personal acquaintance with it, I may just try to finish that road, humming an old song or two about freedom and home, mumbling an old phrase or two from the mythic lore of Appalachia about Boone and Walking John Gay, about an end both to the

uninflected wilderness and the wearying split infinitives of the Interstates and all the Appalachian Corridors.

#### NOTES

- 1 Faulkner's hill-people are "Appalachian" not only because the powerful Senator Stennis of Mississippi was a member of the appropriations committee behind the Appalachian Regional Commission (as some students of Appalachia have suggested), but because the hill-country of northeastern Mississippi is palpably as well as "legally" Appalachian, and because Faulkner thought of his hill-people—with their East Tennessee and Blue Ridge heritage—as still inhabiting a region which is "the final blue and dying echo of the Appalachian Mountains." Indeed, although Faulkner has been neglected (when not maligned) by students of "Appalachian literature", his hill-people, their Appalachian tradition, mood and manners, represent one of the richest workings of the veins of the hillfolk myth.
- 2 The quotation from Roberts' journal is cited in Robert Penn Warren's "Introduction" to *The Time of Man*, the 1963 Viking edition. The reader who desires a more thoroughgoing discussion of road symbolism and the hillfolk myth as they appear in the fiction discussed in this essay is referred to an unpublished dissertation, H. R. Stoneback, "The Hillfolk Tradition and Images of the Hillfolk in American Fiction Since 1926," Vanderbilt University, 1970.
- 3 In addition, in radio and television appearances in China, the program directors invariably requested that we sing "Take Me Home, Country Roads." After lectures on American folk and country music, someone always asked me how "...Country Roads" fit the patterns I had discussed. When a Chinese publisher asked me to compile a book of "American Folksongs, he made a special point of asking me to include"...Country Roads." And, after I had divided the songs in that book into various categories—"Prison Songs," "Work Songs," etc.—the Chinese publishers and readers expressed their greatest enthusiasm for these categories: "Songs of the Road" and "Songs of Home." And the Chinese, too, like the people in Day's road-house, prefer "You Are My Sunshine" to "Barbara Allen."

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# Bertha Cook, Blue Ridge National Heritage Fellow

by  
*Thomas McGowan*

Bertha Cook (Figure 1) sits on the front porch of her neat white house in Sands, a community north of Boone, four miles down N.C. state route 194.<sup>1</sup> She pulls fourteen strands of white thread, doubled in her needle, through a ball of beeswax and then begins to twist and pull a quick line of colonial knots through blue dots on a large sheet of muslin. Knots pop up in neat rows. She occasionally stops to snip off unacceptable knots with scissors. Rows of knots meet to form patterns. They trace the windings and leaf shapes of a grape vine. Around a central wreath of the grape vine design is a rectangle of small knots. Close up, the knots appear like little flowers, the crossed threads of the knotting making a deft, tight cluster.

Bertha Cook has made traditional knotted bedspreads in this way since the second decade of this century. For over twenty years she demonstrated her craft at the Blue Ridge Parkway Craft Center in Blowing Rock. In 1984 the National Endowment for the Arts recognized her career as traditional craftsperson, the excellence of her work, and her role as active bearer of this Blue Ridge tradition by naming her a National Heritage Fellow.<sup>2</sup>

The knotted bedspreads Mrs. Cook makes are folk artifacts native to families in Watauga County, North Carolina.<sup>3</sup> A spread's basic field, a large sheet of unbleached or whitened muslin, is decorated with patterns formed by small knots and other embroidery stitches. Yarn fringe tied into intricate patterns trims the spread. The fringe and knot designs follow patterns handed on in local families, and the way of making spreads has been passed from mother to daughter. Makers use traditional knot and fringe patterns that they alter by their individual artistry. Using methods and patterns practiced by at least five generations of her family, Bertha Cook applies the dynamics of folk art—tradition and innovation—to produce spreads distinguished by her individual skills and family values. She is an active bearer of the material culture traditions of knotted bedspread making and a noted raconteur of the tales that express the history and values of that craft. During her years as demonstrator at the Parkway Craft Center and at folk festivals and crafts fairs, those traditions have touched a public wider than her family and community.<sup>4</sup>

To start a new spread Mrs. Cook follows traditional local ways of "stamping" or "laying off" patterns. Mrs. Cook places the new muslin sheeting over a spread already knotted with the chosen pattern. While she once would lay the pattern spread across a porch floor and tack and stretch it down



Photo by  
Tom McGowan

**Figure 1.** Bertha Cook works on a kotted bedspread on her front porch, Sands, N.C., summer 1984.

“neat,” she now uses her double bed as backing for stamping. She explains, “If I put it on the floor, I couldn’t get up.” She then arranges the new spread carefully over the pattern spread, paying attention to position the new sheeting squarely with the pattern area in the desired position.

Mrs. Cook stamps with a cloth soaked in a bluing solution. By rubbing the cloth over the ridges formed by the knot patterns below the spread, the pressure of the knots below causes a bit of bluing to wear off onto the new spread. The bluing marks form lines of dots which duplicate the position of the old knots. Later, when she has finished knotting the pattern over the dots, she will soak the spread to remove the bluing marks.

Part of Mrs. Cook’s tale repertory discusses stamping in times past. Because knotted bedspread making became a source of extra cash income for households, having patterns from which to copy spreads for sales became important. A family might protect its copy of a good seller, sharing it only with selected relatives and neighbors. One set of stories reflects those days of sales rivalries. After suitable hesitation to show she doesn’t wish to spread scandal, Mrs. Cook tells of surreptitious overnight “borrowings” of spreads. While a spread was soaking in a stream to take out the bluing or hanging on a clothesline to dry, another maker might briefly sneak it home to be stamped so she could acquire the new pattern. Mrs. Cook also relates a repeated local story describing how some women in the old days used sooty pie-plate bottoms, instead of bluing, to stamp a new spread. But she admits that she can’t understand how they could get such sheets clean again.

Mrs. Cook also recounts a favorite family folk story about her mother, Mrs. Cary Hodges.<sup>5</sup> When young, Mrs. Hodges arranged with a neighbor to stamp a Bird in Tree pattern, a very popular seller then. At the time, Mrs. Hodges didn’t have a full bed-sized width of muslin, but was making the new spread from two narrower sheets that she planned to sew together. But in her hurry to copy the two half pattern, separately on each of the sheets, she reversed the birds’ positions and so produced two birds facing out instead of in. Mrs. Cook laughs each time she repeats this favorite tale. She remembers what a fine maker her mother was and delights that even such an expert could make a basic mistake that reversed a traditional design.

Mrs. Cook keeps a collection of old spreads in an upstairs room for stamping patterns, but she has not been locked into simply copying them. Her rightful pride is her own “personal” Grape Wreath, a stately design with a rich circle of grapes and vine in its center (Figure 2).<sup>6</sup> In the spread business, Grape Wreath designs had developed as popular sellers, but Mrs. Cook wasn’t satisfied with duplicating someone else’s pattern. She describes how she made her own design: “I made the circle by tracing a wash basin, and I made grape bunches where I thought they should be. There’s fifty-seven of ‘em.” Even in duplicating this pattern, Mrs. Cook will make small changes, adjusting small details as she works along.

Five years ago a Double Grape Wreath from Appalachian State’s Fry

Collection became popular after being pictured in a magazine article.<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Cook asked if I could get her the spread to stamp. She and her daughters Wilma Hartley and Mary Brown made copies, and Mrs. Cook filled some telephone orders for the spread. But she relates she didn't like it as much as the Single Grape Wreath she herself designed. She made only a few special order Double Grape Wreaths before returning to making her own design.

The basic stitch in Mrs. Cook's spreads is a knot made with multiple-ply cotton thread. She is very particular in distinguishing the kind of knot she uses. While some local makers use a conventional French knot, Mrs. Cook calls her stitch "colonial knots." She learned the stitch from her mother, who used this same term. Mrs. Cook has taught it to her daughters and granddaughters and to observers (even me). She also dislikes the term "candlewicking" to describe her work. While "candlewick spread" is a term current in both scholarly and popular needlework lexicons for this type work,<sup>8</sup> Mrs. Cook, like many local makers, limits "candlewick" to describing tufted stitching, a once popular local practice, but one Mrs. Cook doesn't particularly like. Her personal definitions of "colonial knot" and "candlewicking" reflect her senses of pride and close personal and family identity in her work.

For her Grape Wreath pattern, Mrs. Cook's knotting material is seven strands of cotton thread doubled over in her needle to form a fourteen-ply cable. She varies the number of strands according to the knot size proper to different patterns. Before beginning to knot, she firmly pulls the strand through a slit in a beeswax chunk to help keep the strands together and smooth the sewing. She starts a knot row by pushing the needle into her sheeting and then pulling it out at the spot where she wants the next knot. She pulls the thread through with her right hand on the needle, and then, with her left hand, bends the thread coming out of the sheeting to the left. She holds this thread bend, usually about three inches from the exit hole, close to the sheeting, but not so tight that she can't twist her needle around it. She reaches her needle over and under this thread segment and twists the needle so that the thread wraps once around it. Then she pushes the needle back through the fabric close to spot where it had just come out. She pops the needle back out at the point for the next knot and begins to pull the thread tight. The tightening of the twisted thread forms her "colonial knot."

The colonial knot is the only embroidery stitch used in Cook family Sunflower, Bird in Tree, and Bowknot and Thistle patterns. Over forty years ago, Mrs. Cook did make tufting in a Hickory Leaf spread, which she still uses to cover her own double bed, but "turfing," as tufting is called locally, is something she no longer does. She does supplement the basic colonial knot of her Grape Wreath spreads with satin-stitch grapes and running-stitch leaf veins. Again she learned these other stitches from her mother.

After the embroidered sections are finished and the bluing washed out,

Mrs. Cook trims the spread with hand-tied fringe (Figure 3). She makes fringe by tying repeated loops of a cotton-yarn cable. She forms this cable by winding together six strands of four-ply yarn, which is thicker and rougher than her knotting thread. Some makers call it "tobacco twine." To tie fringe, she uses two sets of tools made by her late husband: a wooden frame and various-sized wooden needles.

First she wraps a good supply of six-strand cable about the center of a hardwood needle or "shunt." Then seated before the frame, she passes the needle around the frame's top rail and ties a series of loops. Building from this base row of loops, she ties other loop tiers, again using quick twists and passes of the shunt to knot the yarn. She uses "sticks," dowels of different sizes, to gauge each row. By varying the size and form of loops and knots, she forms tiers of elegant "lace" to be sewn along the fringe edge. For a double-bed spread, she ties eight yards of fringe. When she has tied the final row of loops, she then cuts the loops around the frame's rail. These loose ends produce the fringe edge that will hang down from spread.

In earlier days, she notes, makers often used a broom handle across two chairs for a frame. Mrs. Cook herself has two frames. The larger one is for work at home. Its smaller partner is more transportable; she used it in demonstrations on the front porch of the Parkway Crafts Center.

Although she knows of plastic shunts available in crafts stores—in fact, her daughter Jackie Clay uses a set—Mrs. Cook prefers keeping her old husband-made wooden set. Her preference again shows her allegiance to things made in her family—artifacts that have proved serviceable, but which also carry family connections for her.

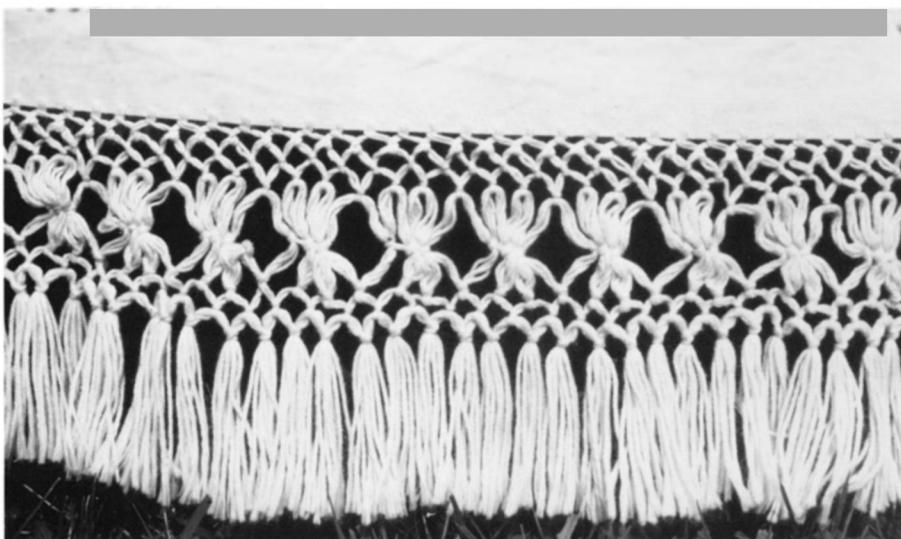
Different arrangements of fringe have local names, which Mrs. Cook identifies readily. The Cook fringe repertory ranges from Spider Web to Single and Double Fence Rows, but Mrs. Cook's favored choice in recent years has often been Crowfoot bordered by a simple Net pattern. It forms handsome spread edging, but she also prefers it for economic reasons. Crowfoot takes less yarn than another favorite, Spider Web. She often comments on the continually higher costs of materials and so sometimes combines aesthetics and frugality in favoring Crowfoot.

Over the years Mrs. Cook has sometimes teamed with one of her daughters in making a spread. While mother finishes the colonial knot field of the spread, daughter will be tying the fringe trim for it. Boone's bookmobile librarian, Mary Brown, remembers learning from her mother when she had "to stand on a wooden box" to reach the top of the fringing frame. These spreads combining mother's and daughter's work lose nothing of Mrs. Cook's demanding standards and represent a meaningful joining of work by different generations in the family tradition. This splitting of work was a characteristic of Mrs. Cook's demonstrating with her mother, Carrie Hodges,<sup>9</sup> and has been repeated in later dual demonstrations by Mrs. Cook and her own daughters.



**Figure 2.** Details from Bertha Cook's Single Grape Wreath design for kotted bedspreads.

Photo by  
Tom McGowan



**Figure 3.** Spider Web pattern fringe, handtied by Bertha Cook.

Photo by  
Tom McGowan

Bertha Cook takes special pride in the sewing of fringe to a spread. She points out that not many local makers know her attachment technique. She takes care that fringe along sides is spread attractively, and she pulls fringe loops together tighter at corners so they will hang properly. She attaches the fringe strip with a briar stitch sewn with the same yarn used in fringe tying. The briar stitch looped through the first row of fringe gives the appearance of another row of Net. This practice adds a little more width to the fringe, but also gives the appearance that the fringe is tied directly to the sheeting, instead of having been made separately. Again Mrs. Cook learned this technique from her mother, and she has taught it to her daughters. Like her preference for colonial knots, this special touch forms part of the Cook family heritage of spread making.

Days spent demonstrating her craft at festivals and the fairs of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild and on its closed-in demonstration porch at the Moses Cone manor house have provided outside reinforcement of Mrs. Cook's family craft and story traditions. Tourist observers have become her customers and best advertising. Their compliments have corroborated the strong family pride she always possessed for her craft and her mother's ways. Mrs. Cook has also handed on her craft and her mother's ways. Mrs. Cook has also handed on her craft by example and spoken instructions to interested women outside the traditional contexts of family and local community. Stories of women who tried to show her the "right" way to French knot or who just couldn't catch on to fringe tying are now parts of Mrs. Cook's narrative repertory. Talking with the public has also provided another context for her to repeat her tales of knotting in earlier days, to recount anecdotes illustrating the values and techniques of her craft, and to emphasize its history in her family as a "hand me down" craft. Although those outside contacts have provided a market and publicity for Mrs. Cook's work, I doubt they have much influenced her ways of working, her pattern choices, or her aesthetic preferences. As her son J.D. Cook remarked after viewing a videotape of Mrs. Cook working and talking, "She's just like Momma Hodges," the mother who taught her to knot and fringe.

Fine needlework and this connecting of generations distinguish knotted bedspread making in the Cook family tradition. One of my favorite stories from Mrs. Cook's narrative repertory describes how she learned fringe tying in 1913. It is a tale that sums up a long life well spent in following a family craft tradition. She relates:

I was 18 years old...My grandmother, my aunts, and my mother, they all did it. I never did want to tie it, but I did...One day, Momma said, "Now big as you are, if you don't learn to tie fringe I'm gonna whip you." So I didn't want to be whipped and I learned. Now I've been tyin' ever since.

## NOTES

1. Eighty slide illustrations accompanied the presentation of this paper.

Earlier articles on Bertha Cook are my "Bertha Cook, Maker of Knotted Bedspreads," *Appalachian Arts* 3 (Fall 1980): 1-2, rpt. as "This Tie Binds Family, Tradition, Art," *Charlotte Observer*, 10 Sept. 1980, p. 14A; "Mrs. Bertha Cook, an Appalachian Artist," *Black Jack* 12 (1983): 21-23; and "Bertha Cook, Maker of Blue Ridge Spreads," *The Arts Journal* 10 (March 1985): 42. This paper incorporates findings from those articles. Mrs. Cook is also the subject of a videotape, "Bertha Cook, Maker of Knotted Bedspreads," available through the Department of English, Appalachian State University. Short discussions of Mrs. Cook are included in Cynthia R. Ramsay, "Fiber and Fabric," *The Craftsman in America* (Washington: National Geographic Society, 1975), pp. 98-99; W. Amos Abrams, "Citations: Bertha Hodges Cook," *North Carolina Folklore Journal* 22 (May 1974): 95; and a film directed by Stella Stevens, "The American Heroine. Part I: A Dream of the South."

2. See "Bertha Cook," *The National Heritage Fellowships* (Washington: National Endowment for the Arts, 1984), p. 5.
3. For discussions of Watauga County spreadmaking, see Annette Riley Fry, "Bedspreads in the Mountain Manner," *Americana*, May-June 1978, pp. 28-32, and Lark Shea, "Mrs. Annie Watson: A Maker of Appalachian Knotted Bedspreads," *North Carolina Folklore Journal* 30 (Spring-Summer 1982): 34-42.
4. Mrs. Cook demonstrated at the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild's Craftsman's Fairs in Gatlinburg, Tenn., and Asheville, N.C., 1951-77; the North Carolina State Fair's Village of Yesterday, 1952-80; Appalachian State University's "Blue Ridge Coverlets and Knotted Bedspreads: A Regional Exhibit," 1981; the World's Fair Folklife Festival, Knoxville, Tenn., 1982. A postcard (Aerial Photography Services, Charlotte, N.C.) pictures her demonstrating at the Southern Highland Guild's Craftsman's Fair.
5. For discussions of Carrie Hodges, see Emma Weaver, *Crafts in the Southern Highlands* (Asheville, N.C.: Southern Highland Guild, 1975), p. 42, and Edward L. Dupuy, "Mrs. C.G. Hodges: Fringing and Knotting," *Artisans of the Appalachians* (Asheville, N.C.: Miller Printing, 1967), pp. 38-9.
6. This spread is pictured in "Getting Started in Candlewicking," *Decorating Crafts Ideas*, Sept. 1981, pp. 22-23.
7. Riley, p. 31.
8. See, for example, Allen H. Eaton, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1937; rpt. New York: Dover, 1973), pp. 225-27; Carleton Safford, *America's Quilts and Coverlets* (New York: Dutton, 1972), p. 279; and Yvonne L. Amico, *Candlewicking from Yesterday* (Irvine, Cal.: Gick Publishing, 1983).
9. A photograph of Bertha Cook and Carrie Hodges hangs in a side corridor of the Parkway Crafts Center in the Moses Cone manor house, Blowing Rock, N.C.

# Mabry Hill as Metaphor

by  
Parks Lanier

For fifty years now the Blue Ridge Parkway has symbolized human ingenuity in man's triumph over the mountains. Harley E. Jolley's account of the building of the Parkway recalls that often "the survey parties found themselves cutting swaths through a country so isolated that it still presented a frontier-like atmosphere. Getting to the survey site itself was an adventure that carried the survey crews from modern cities and transportation into a mountain wilderness where the terrain was extremely rugged and the obstacles to a man on foot were numerous" (Jolley 108). Now from milepost zero at Rockfish Gap in Virginia to milepost 469.1 in North Carolina the mountains have been tamed. Intrepid motorcyclists and even bicyclists travel where fifty years ago no one ventured. Visitors are counted by the tens of millions annually.

A favorite stopping place for millions of these visitors is Mabry Mill at milepost 176. The seventy-five year old mill remains in operating order, much as it was when Ed Mabry and his wife, "The Boss," kept it between 1910 and 1935.<sup>1</sup> For tourists it is an attractive anachronism, something which can be used but is no longer useful. In his poem "The Mill," Edwin Arlington Robinson has left a dispairing portrait of a miller and his wife who have outlived their usefulness. They kill themselves. Such was not the fate of the Mabrys who did not outlive the era in which they were useful, he dying in 1936 and she in 1938 after selling the mill to the National Park Service which was bringing the Parkway to their front door.<sup>2</sup>

Today, Mabry Mill supplies tourists with buckwheat flour, cornmeal, and grits. But that is not all they may come away with. Mabry Mill dispenses information on the Appalachian way of life as well. Behind the mill is an area which displays "examples of mountain industry from Mabry's time."<sup>3</sup> By walking from exhibit to exhibit along a circular asphalt trail, the visitor finds himself in an area which is both museum and garden. From the buildings, tools, and farm implements on display, he can glimpse authentic patterns of life and work fifty or seventy-five years old. The artifacts he views have been carefully selected and artistically arranged. From time to time the visitor can discover some of them in use, as at apple butter or molasses making season, but for most of the time they stand barren of life. The moonshine still is never used; it remains discreetly empty, off to itself among trees in an area remote from the path which winds to the more lawful mint still or bark press.

As Harley Jolley says, "A ride along the (Blue Ridge) highway opens windows on a cultural history more than two centuries old" (Jolley 3). The

garden-museum behind Mabry Mill is only one such window, but the view onto which it opens is remarkably beautiful. Purists in the study of Appalachian life may argue that it is too prettified and therefore misleading. They might say that because the view is highly selective, it risks the very authenticity it boasts. It is too narrow even to be called a microcosm of Appalachia, yet common aspects of the Appalachian experience are highlighted for the busy tourist. As the guiding brochure points out, "The exhibits include a horse-powered cane mill used to squeeze the sugary juices from sorghum stalks; an evaporator where the juice was boiled into sorghum molasses; a mint still used to distill the flavorful oil from the mint plant; and the fabled moonshine still, a source of both praise and condemnation in mountain tales and songs."<sup>4</sup> There is also a blacksmith shop where on most weekends the fire is hot and the anvil rings, and a cabin useful for displays of quilting and weaving, but there is no privy to be seen.

Mabry Mill is not a microcosm of Appalachian life, but it is a microcosm of the Blue Ridge Parkway. One way to view the Parkway is to see it as a garden 469 miles long and 2 lanes wide. It is a garden through which one can travel at forty-five miles an hour, or in which one can remain motionless in contemplation. Mabry Mill, like the Parkway, is a planned experience. Harley Jolley reminds us that great care has been taken to show nature to advantage. "Working very closely with the (Parkway) engineer," he says, "was the landscape architect. He determined which trees would be sacrificed, which stone cliff would be blasted, where the overlooks would go, what could be done to hide the scars made by the construction crews, where a retaining rail would be located, and whether the roadside fences would be stone or rail. In Short, any question of an aesthetic nature came within the province of this specialist, whose guiding principle over the years has been to promote to the fullest the Parkway's natural beauty" (Jolley 131).

Interpreting the Appalachian experience has always been largely a question of aesthetics, whether it be a consideration of quilt making or the best way to paper one's walls with newspaper and magazine pages.<sup>5</sup> The Blue Ridge Parkway is 469 miles of interpretation written in tree and stone, in grass and rail.

In constructing a garden there are, says Teiji Ito, who has written about the Japanese garden, "only two attitudes toward nature. One confronts it or one accepts it" (Iwamiya and Ito 7). In interpreting the Appalachian experience, there are, similarly, only two attitudes. One confronts it or one accepts it. Since the Blue Ridge Parkway and the museum-garden which is Mabry Mill are interpretations of life along the Parkway and, by extension, off the Parkway as well, it is important which aesthetic attitude prevails, the one of confrontation or the one of acceptance.

The presence of a Resident Landscape Architect on the Blue Ridge Parkway staff would seem to suggest that the project prefers confrontation to acceptance. But Teiji Ito's insights into the Japanese garden suggest that

another attitude may be at work. "Ask a Japanese gardener the secret of gardening," Ito says, "and he will hold up his pruning shears. This pruning, called *sentei*, allows a more natural and, at the same time, more ideal beauty to emerge. The beauty is there from the first. It is not created, it is merely allowed to express itself in a louder voice and in plainer terms. The beautiful garden lives. The gardener merely makes this beautiful garden more visible" (Iwamiya and Ito 9).

This principle of pruning, magnified by dynamite and bulldozers, seems to have been at work along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Spread over 469 miles, the process becomes nearly invisible. Concentrated in a few acres of Mabry Mill, it cannot be hidden as easily as one hides a two-mile scar on a mountainside. Rocks millions of years old could be moved, but not a mill in place only 25 years. It required from the landscape architect acceptance, not confrontation.. A screen of pine trees along the southbound lane suggests a compromise between artistic dictates and the mill's inherent limitations. Ed Mabry did not build for nostalgia; he built for utility. Parkway aesthetics, however, embraced the mill and it, in turn, exerted its influence. The struggle has yielded a harmonious resolution with acceptance on both sides.

Mabry Mill is a tour garden, and as such has much in common with the Japanese tour garden. This particular garden style in the Japanese tradition evolved from the religious paradise garden and the tea garden (Iwamiya and Ito 40). Like the area around Mabry Mill, "these tour gardens were very free in both form and pattern" (40). But unlike Mabry Mill, "the tour garden, no matter how many buildings it contained, was always arranged around its path, and this path was always arranged around the lake or pond....Occasionally, in addition, there were branch paths, looping out and returning" (42). At Mabry Mill, the pond is isolated from much of the tour path which loops behind it. The water is wedged between the front of the mill and the Parkway, a happy circumstance for tourists who cannot stop, but who can say nevertheless, "I saw Mabry Mill."

Mabry Mill, as I said earlier, is a microcosm of the Blue Ridge Parkway, not of Appalachia. This selectivity is also something which it shares with the Japanese tour garden, which may display a small-scale Mount Fuji or other notable scene, or use distant scenery, such as mountains, as a background for a garden which "frames" it. Such "borrowed scenery" is very popular. Teiji Ito says, "The idea of borrowing a view and incorporating it into a garden was not new. In a sense it had always existed. A mossy stone brought from deep in the mountains and set up in a town garden brought with it more than itself. It brought the suggestions of the place from whence it came....Tour gardens, if possible, incorporated at least some of the surrounding scenery" (45).

Additionally, a Japanese tour garden might be allusive in its construction, inviting a visitor with literary tastes to find there an entire story or favorite scenes. Ito says, "A rewarding walk in the Katsura garden, for

example, presumed a thorough knowledge of *The Tale of Genjii*, said to have been Prince Toshihito's favorite book and one which had certainly been consulted in determining precisely what was to go into the garden" (Iwamiya and Ito 45).

Obviously there is no need to import rocks or miniature mountains into Mabry Mill's garden, but there is borrowed scenery aplenty: the lumber rack, the log hauler, even an entire cabin which has been dragged onto the property from miles down the road. And this borrowed scenery cannot help but be allusive since it is an assemblage of the material culture of Appalachia so long celebrated by novelists, poets, historians, folklorists, and other regional investigators. All the volumes of *Foxfire* are for sale in the Mabry Mill giftshop, if one needs to refresh his memory.

To the Japanese garden in Portland, Oregon, the "novel innovation" of a haiku poetry stone was added to characterize the garden (McFadden 200-201). In the Mabry Mill tour garden, poems by Appalachian writers might easily replace the utilitarian placards. By the iron kettle, for example, one could pause to read Jeff Daniel Marion's poem "Recipe," which describes the making of lye soap:

collect & mix  
water, a sprinkle of ashes, & seepage  
in an iron kettle:  
one tempered by the burning  
years of use,  
black & three-legged to squat  
over the fire you have prepared

(Marion 16)

Beside the plow is a perfect place for Jim Wayne Miller's "Breaking Ground," a poem constructed in the shape of a plow point (Miller 30). I regret the absence of a well at Mabry Mill, for by it I would affix a copy of Fred Chappell's "Cleaning the Well," with its line for tourists who enjoy mountain water, "Whoo! It's God Damn cold!" (Chappell 14). Billy Edd Wheeler's poem "The Craft Shop" could be tucked among the giftshop displays of Mabry Mill coasters and place mats hawked by a clerk who quotes, "Howdy, and what can I do-ye-fer?" (Higgs & Manning 327).

The garden-museum of Mabry Mill, selective though it is, pruned though it is, instructs us, as the entire Blue Ridge Parkway from which it takes its cue instructs us, in an Appalachian aesthetic. In the interplay of light and shadow, in clear air or in mist, one sees the diversity—evergreen and deciduous, sharp needle and broad leaf, rough trunk and smooth limbs. There is permanence and change—the mountains, the water rushing over the mill wheel. There is simplicity and complexity in wood and stone, man's geometry and the geometry of nature. Man's tools are there, stones to grind the grain, wheels to haul the wood, plows to cut the earth. Everywhere there is contrast and kinship.

If a garden is one which accepts rather than confronts nature, as the garden at Mabry Mill is, it holds a special gift for its visitor. To him it imparts a yearning to seek the garden in the world to which he returns. The paradox of the garden is like the paradox of the poem. It is not our world we are to find in it; instead, we are to seek it in our world. One may find it in unexpected places and at unexpected times. It may come in the weathered pattern of rock, the patina of wood, the translucence of a leaf, or it may be found in a sound or a taste. Perhaps that is why tourists carry away bags of buckwheat from Mabry Mill, so they can taste the garden later, far away.

Danny Marion titled one of his books of poetry *Out in the Country, Back Home*. I would also like to suggest "out in the garden, back home." From that perspective, there are no tourists at Mabry Mill, only homefolks looking for home.

#### NOTES

1. *Mabry Mill Today and Yesterday* (Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1977), section 1.
2. *Mabry Mill*, section 5.
3. *Mabry Mill*, section 1.
4. *Mabry Mill*, section 1.
5. See, for example, Geraldine N. Johnson, "'Plain and Fancy': The Socioeconomics of Blue Ridge Quilts" and Charles E. Martin, "Decorating the Appalachian House," both articles in *Appalachian Journal*, autumn 1982.

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# The Folk Tales of the Eastern Blue Ridge

by  
*Jody Brown and Rex Stephenson*

Each region of the United States has created and preserved its own folk tales, stories passed down through generations via the oral tradition. The legends that surround Casey Jones, John Henry, Davy Crockett, Jesse James, and Simon Suggs have become as much a part and symbol of our culture as the American flag. During the last forty years most of these regional folk tales have been recorded or printed, resulting in the generalization of most folk tales. Nevertheless, folk tales still indicate the values that once marked particular regions and show the process a society uses to pass its values on to others.

The South produced an unusual variety of folk tales. The isolation of the residents and the importance of the oral tradition, especially in the more mountainous communities, encouraged diversity in folk stories. Although many of the folk tales derived from Old World stories, the free adaptations in the new environment and culture that settlers discovered in the South produced a plethora of variants. A typical story about an uncaring stepmother abusing her stepchildren only to be defeated by them may have many different versions even in a relatively small area.

The material for the stories did not establish a tradition in itself. The key ingredients were excellent storytellers, eager audiences, and numerous occasions for the stories to be transmitted. The all important storytellers were first, of course, products of their cultures. They shared the same language, dialect, values, beliefs, aspirations, and predicaments. Rather than someone brought in from specialized training elsewhere, the storyteller was one who was very much a part of that community or group to which he was speaking. His relationship to the folklore was deeply felt. The folk material reflected him as a fellow member, a fellow creator, and a fellow perpetuator of the community as much as the audience. Thus, the storyteller had a personal connection with the material that he was transmitting.

Since he was a product of that community, his creations and inventions were likely to come from an honest understanding of the community values inherent in the material. His personal connection enabled the storyteller, in his inventiveness, to be flexible. He knew the character types, the environment, and the kinds of situations that entertained his listeners. Because he also knew the mentality and temperament of his audience, he could easily integrate local features into his narratives.

This empathy between the storyteller and the community not only gave the storyteller his material, it also encouraged his art. Once the storyteller has chosen to tell a particular plot, he begins making choices. These choices

reveal his skill and knowledge in the marrying of traditional stories and local color with the dramatic. Because he does not merely copy what he has been told and experienced, but instead reshapes and refines the material through his special awareness, he is an artist. The community's influence, however, is still important. Unlike other artists who also create art from the ingredients of their lives, the storyteller constantly evolves his stories and tests them in presentation.

For a folk tale to endure the listeners must do more than understand and appreciate the story; they must tell it. The story must so capture their fears, beliefs, general knowledge, humor, concerns, or values that they repeat the story. Unlike the art of the writer, poet, painter, composer, or potter whose work produces an artifact, the storyteller's art is ephemeral. The successful storyteller discovers how to employ personality and a sense of the dramatic through observing other storytellers, the audience responses, and the audience's attention during the narration. Intuitively, he learns about pause, inflection, vocal color, and dramatic build and so becomes adept in these skills during delivery. The tales that survive in the Blue Ridge are the ones with regionally important material fired in the kiln of regular retelling by numerous successful storytellers.

The Southern way of life with its close kinship ties, casual and relaxed tempo, and pride in developing an oral memory also lent itself to the perpetuation of storytelling. Cecil Sharp, an Englishman who traveled in Franklin County in 1918, recalled: "They are a leisurely, cheery people in their quite way," and noted that although many of the mountain folk were illiterate, "they are good talkers, using an abundant vocabulary racily and often picturesquely."<sup>1</sup>

Although the Jack Tale is probably the most famous folk tale of the general Blue Ridge region, it is not the most common on the eastern slope. This area is rich with ghost—haint—stories, witch tales, tall tales, and especially moonshining stories. These folk tales show the values of people and the means society uses to transmit cultural concepts. The best source for these stories is Raymond Sloan whose father taught school in Franklin County. In addition to stories he recalled from his father, Sloan was a WPA folklore collector in Franklin county. Sloan, who never trained as a folklorist, stated once that he was probably chosen because he was a good typist. However, Sloan was an excellent collector, and much of the traditional material he preserved has been published in *Uncle Esom's Grist Mill—Other Stories, Folk Tales and Tall Tales*.

One of the most interesting stories in this collection is "The Hoop Snake." The story assumes that the audience is familiar with this unusual species of reptile that grabs its tail in its mouth and rolls downhill. In the story several children are playing with barrel rings by rolling them down the mountain. One of them accidentally picks up the hoop snake—this vicious snake that only inhabits the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge. The terror of the children

when they realize that the hoop is alive teaches the audience to be careful in their play. As both a tall tale and a warning tale, "The Hoop Snake" shows how storytellers were important teachers as well as entertainers in the society.

Probably the best known, but unpublished Franklin County tale, "Early's Light," illustrates local adaptation of traditional stories in order to convey moral themes. Miss Elsie Turner of Burnt Chimney and Dr. J. Francis Amos of Rocky Mount are the primary sources for the story. The story recounts the death of Jubal Early's brother and his wife's plan to marry the overseer of the plantation shortly thereafter. The two Early boys, in an attempt to stop the wedding, bring the deceased Early's coffin to the wedding. While everyone recounts this incident as a factual tale and numerous individuals around Burnt Chimney attest to seeing the "Light," that is Early's ghost wandering from the grave, the tale is still very close to the archetypal situation of a husband trying to influence his wife and society, a story best known to us as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare's play is in the tradition of several Roman, Norse, German, and French stories which feature a Danish King, Horwendil, who is murdered by Feng, his brother, in order to be able to marry Geratha, Horwendil's wife. Pretending to be mad, the Queen's son, Amleth, commits a number of irrational acts until he can avenge the murder and thus cleanse the nation. In the Saxo Grammaticus legend the hero feigns stupidity to protect himself against his uncle-father.<sup>2</sup> While "Early's Light" carries no suggestion that the principle female character may be an accessory to the murder nor any question of succession to a throne—both common features of this general European story—it does use many other story elements. The two Early boys do pretend cooperation after first objecting to their mother's remarriage. The remarriage threatens the boys' inheritance and way of life. The ghost of the first husband speaks directly to the wife and, in so doing, changes her attitude about the marriage. While there is no doubt that some parts of "Early's Light" are true, most of its dramatic qualities seem to have been derived from this general European tradition. Furthermore, the story clearly conveys the area's moral themes of eternal faithfulness, preservation of family control of property, and the relative roles of women and men.

The most prevalent folk tale representative of the Blue Ridge is the "Jack Tale". Jack Tales, which center on the "little feller" who always comes out on top, were originally Old World tales. The character appears in Jacobs' British collection as Jack in Germany as a character called Hans. Richard Chase, the individual most responsible for recording the Jack Tales, notes: "It is clear that much of our American tradition is Irish and German as well as British."<sup>3</sup>

The mountain folk modified and adapted the Jack Tales to fit the Blue Ridge environment and cultural situation. In their present form the Jack Tales represent "a curious mixture of Old World tales and mountain life." Thus "Jack and the Beanstalk" became "Jack and the Bean tree." Although

it is basically the same story, each incident has been varied to fit mountain life. Jack hides from the giant in the bake-oven, and instead of stealing a golden goose, a magical harp, and a bag of gold, he takes a "skinnin' knife," a "rifle-gun," and a "coverlid" that has "bells all over it." The giants dialogue still partially reflects the English heritage of the story:

FEE! FAW! FUMM!

I smell the blood of an Englishmun.  
Bein' he dead of bein' he alive,  
I'll grind his bones,  
To eat with my pones.

Another example of adapting the stories is the tale, "Jack and the Hidden Valley." In this tale, Jack goes for a walk and comes upon a party where the King is dancing the Virginia Reel. Jack walks up to the King and says, "Howdy, King." The King replies, "Howdy, Son." Jack and the King begin to talk when a "whole passel of big unicorns come up in front of them and "bellered a mighty blast." Later Jack notices the King's daughter and asks to marry her, but the King turns down his request. Jack and the King's daughter run away when "he seed they was all drunk." The next day Jack and the girl return to find the King, but all they find is a sign which reads "Moved to a New Location, signed, the King." So Jack and the girl "was married" and "had fourteen Kinds, jest like Jack."

This story illustrates the lack of any understanding of kings of kingdoms. The idea that a king would just move his kingdom like mountain people move to another point in the "holler" was perfectly acceptable. Another major point this story illustrates is that the mountain folk have a very democratic spirit. Since everyone was equal, finding the King doing the Virginia Reel and talking to a commoner like Jack was completely acceptable, even expected.<sup>4</sup>

Only one Jack Tale was ever recorded in Franklin County. In 1980 Raymond Sloan, recalled "Jack and the Lump of Silver," a tale his father, P.T. Sloan, told him. Raymond Sloan recalled his father's teaching days at Pigg River and how every Friday, if the students had been good all week, the afternoon was spent spinning tales. The older Sloan probably heard the Jack Tale from one of his students. The story follows very closely the West Virginia tale of "Foolish Jack;" Jack is sent to town by his mother and on the way trades his lump of silver for a cow that is dry, then trades for a horse that is lame, until finally he ends up with nothing. Despite Jack's material losses the audience sees him as the hero illustrating a strong value of the community about barter and the moral values that influence trading.

Contained within folk tales is a treasure chest of wisdom accumulated and passed by one generation to guide and direct the next. Folk materials mark the growth and progress of civilized man. According to Gerald Tyler, "There are things in folk (materials) that evoke immediate, universal, and sometimes irrational responses; things which seem to touch human beings

not in the head or heart but near the solar plexus." Whether the folk tales "touch" the heart, the mind, or "Near the solar plexus," the point is that they do make an impact upon us. True, they are entertaining, but the value is far greater than just pleasure. Last season's funniest television situation comedy is seldom remembered this year, while folk tales have lasted for centuries.

Besides their enduring qualities, folk tales are important cultural teaching tools. Children always respond to folk material; it seems to say something special to them. Folk stories are as important as play in the preparation of the child for life. If play is the child's equivalent of real experience, then folk tales are the child's equivalent of the great literature of the adult world.

Far from being minor amusements, folk tales put us in touch with the values of people. They affirm the creativity of people and show the power of stories in transmitting cultural principles.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Cecil Sharp, "Cecil Sharp's Collected Papers, 1917-18, American Visit," The Cecil Sharp Library, London, England.
2. Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Vol. 7 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 5-30.
3. Richard Chase, *American Folk Tales and Songs* (New York: Dover Press, 1956), 63-71.
4. R. Rex Stephenson, *The Jack Tales: A Teacher's Guide* (Ferrum: Ferrum College, 1979).

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# The Perfect Work

by  
Thomas Rain Crowe

The eye blinks and we're enraptured in a 'new world'—Such is the experience of traveling the serpent-like spine of the Blue Ridge Parkway. With each bend in the road a new panorama and a new experience of indigenous discovery. A road which travels the high ridge-line of the Southern Appalachian Mountains is almost as mythic a fashion as the Cherokee tell their stories of the Uktena: the horned snake guardian of the Smoky Mountains, where the parkway ends to the south near the Georgia line. And all the while as 'pristine' in its upkeep and landscape as Jefferson's 'Monticello,' where the parkway begins to the north as if it were but an expansion of the driveway to that historic house....

In this sense the Blue Ridge Parkway is truly the 'high wire' act of the region of the Southern Appalachians. A region known for its natural beauty, its unique cultural heritage, and a climate which not only nurtures sustenance and sustainability, but which conjures up loftier images of a kind of perfection and beauty which would rival those of the 'Garden of Eden' itself.

My journey along this internationally known road is best traced by the line of my life. A line which began in the Parkway's 'feet'—the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina where I spent my boyhood years isolated, protected, and educated by the natural world and the world of Celtic as well as Cherokee tradition. Where I was taught the wisdom of silence from the big trees in the Joyce Kilmer woods. There, I learned of the great gift of abundant and perfectly (naturally) clean water. There, I came to know the ancestral (much like 'grandparents') comfort of the mountains, in this place where time, for a young mountain boy, almost literally, stood still.

Later, my family and I would travel the length of the serpent's back up the parkway to central Virginia, where I spent my high school years in the shadow of Monticello and the echoes of Jeffersonian colonialism, still apparent in the 'plantation smiles' which had come to be labeled "southern hospitality," and a language that was foreign to me, (having come from the world of oral tradition and Scotch-Irish-American dialect, where triple negatives and 'turns of phrase' were high literature!) as if I had been awakened from sleep only to find myself in some foreign land. But like many a plant, I adapted and came to love these lush valleys and round hills as my own—as an extension of the seemingly elder 'grandparents,' those aged and bearded mountains to the south, my family and I had so reluctantly left.

In the years that have followed I have lived in or visited most every corner of these Blue Ridge Mountains, as well as the greater world beyond, and have found that the only way that I know to address them is, as 'Home.'

And if 'home' is where the peace of mind, the strength of will, and the heart is; then truly I am Home! And it's at home that I've found I do my best work, where we do *our* best Work. And it is here that, finally, I've made my stand in pursuit of perfection, as reflected in that work..."The Perfect Work."

'The perfect work' is what we do with our God-given talents, in service, and how we use these talents to grow. To become more fully who we *truly* are. And in this way, how we are related to the individual and collective growth of others, as, by example, we assist them in their 'race' with Destiny. In their struggles to conquer the prejudice of Time...:.

What I am implying here is a reference to the overall process of our collective as well as individual relationship(s) with the process of *change* and stewardship where it pertains to the vision of harmony/growth/well-being amongst all natural systems, both regionally, and with regards to our planet, and beyond....

'The Perfect Work' in its most complete sense, then, would seem to imply an attunement to a process of 'synthesis' simplicity whereas one's own cycle of growth is concerned; and at the same time, an awareness and visionary sensitivity to the regions of natural and mystic Truth that, nest-like, makes up that environment which, in turn, creates one's spiritual-physical-universal Home.

For, to be conscious and *Awake* to the specific realities of the place in which we live; (its ancient history, its more recent history, and its place in the here and now with regard to stewardship and preservation) is important to who we are if we are to see ourselves in this life with respect to knowledge, balance and harmony, and the continuation of our future ancestry.

Yet, a vision confined only to a sense of political, ethnic, or geographic boundaries is a limiting one with regards to the possibilities which lie outside these boundaries. For the words "region" or "work" when implying separation or division, limit our pursuit or understanding of a sense of *greater* unity, with other peoples, other animal and plant life, and other more etheric relationships and knowledge inherent, but in some cases less available, to us all.

So how does one address his 'work' and the peoples of his region through the use of inspired language? Perhaps by first allowing himself to be vulnerable enough to share the experiences of his vision as a journey around the circle of his own life. A life as manifest in his perception of the process of growth. Growth, in its more mythic sense as well as in its more practical sense, which embodies the confrontations one encounters in his wanderings and dealings with the material world, and the experience/wisdom that arises from that journey. A journey which becomes the experience of how one sees himself (how we see ourselves) with regards to individual and collective human Destiny. A Destiny which *is* this life. Such is the Work of the Poet....

With the Blue Ridge of the Southern Appalachians as my natural and experiential link to the world of Nature, the landscape (region) of my

beginnings, and the home of the images I use now as reflections in the ‘mirror’ of my ‘Work,’ I would like to begin this journey around the perimeter and into the ‘soul’ of the cycle of my own growth (this exploration of just what the different aspects of what “work,” and even “the perfect work” might be) at the beginning....

In most of the ancient cultures we know of, their days began with the ritual of thanks and prayer. And just as the beginnings of poetry come from these ancient peoples, our ancestors, and their rituals of song, chant, and prayer, so then should any journey begin in ritual, with the act of giving thanks to all that has come before us, that has given us the foundations from which we draw our inheritance. And, so, it is from the "Work of Respect" for these beginnings, and the true beginnings of the poetic tradition we might begin, with a chant appropriate to the native peoples of the Blue Ridge Mountains and a Cherokee song which is a call to the spirits of Earth, asking for the blessing of unity and harmony in our everyday lives:

And then from the more recent Christian written tradition, and the "equivalent" this adapted version:

## A SONG OF DEVOTION

after David

The earth is my body, and I  
shall not want;  
it beckons me to lie down in green  
pastures.

It shares with me its clean waters; and  
it nurtures my soul.

It leads me along the paths of right thinking  
for its own sake.

Even though I walk through  
valleys among shadows of darkness,  
I fear no evil;  
for the earth is with me;  
its mountains and its seas  
they comfort me.

O, great Earth, you have set a banquet before me  
in the hearts of my enemies;  
have filled my mind with revelations,  
and my wonder grows!  
Surely the deer and the seasons shall  
follow me  
all the days of my life;  
and I will live in the beauty of  
this world  
forever. Hey-when-i. Amen!

With respect for and in remembrance of those traditions that came into this region of the Southern Appalachians and eventually began to call it 'home,' and in that sense became consciously "indigenous," coming to, with love, refer to themselves and their love for this land as "new natives"—we give thanks to that part of our ancestry which came from those European roots:

### **REMEMBERING OUR KIN: A Eulogy**

for Gelolo McHugh  
(1907-1981)

Heaven is in the heart.  
Edens, and pasture of endless green.  
And nothing but soothing light—

Through the gateway to the West,  
death is driving darkness to the grave.  
to corncrabs of night.  
Toward the final thunder of all our collective  
dreams.

In the corners of the planet Earth,  
    nexus is holding its dance.  
Listen, as the spirits of all animals and  
    the hearts of all men  
bounce in perfect rhythm in the dirt!  
    As the resurrection bird sings  
    swansongs to an ancient caste.  
And wind is blessing the air with its wings—

The ashes we are spreading through this grass  
    is food for the rain.  
    A special mist,  
mulching the memories of our past.  
    And the crickets and the robins  
    sing!

    So long old friend.  
The space you are leaving, empty, behind, is slowly filling  
    like a springbed of love in this rain.  
    Here.  
    Where we are all Family in this place.  
Our children soon to be drinking from that stream...

It has been said that the soul of every man is feminine. Sense of Place, and our search for true Identity: “the Work of Inner Balance,” begins then, perhaps, in our search for the feminine. The special muse which speaks to us all, and inspired by whom, we create. Our interior link, in finding and facing “Her,” with the feminine “mother,” in Earth. The goal of this initial stage of the journey being a search for the feminine towards the goal of ‘androgyny.’ A path which, for myself, was one of finding my maleness by discovering first my femininity. A discovery of strength of heart by, first, learning to dance....

## LEARNING TO DANCE

    I am disappearing  
    into the side of her body.  
    Her body, which when it lifts  
and turns, also moves the Earth.  
    I have given up the toys  
    of my childhood  
and my ambitions for old age.  
And have moved deep within  
    the walls of her silver skin.

I am through with my love of suffering.  
And the words that describe that love.  
I am going to carry on a magnificent  
affair with the wind  
from the inside of her body  
where we both sleep.

Friends, I am going deeper, even  
deeper inside than the animal  
or the blade of grass—  
I am looking for the stones.  
The stones that lay to the side  
and in the bed of the Great River.  
Among those stones  
there is only one rock with my name.  
I will pick it up  
and hold it high above my head  
in the inner light.

I will know many things.

Outside with her body, she  
is teaching the world to dance!

From the search for Self, and a sense or place of balance and harmony within, we move, literally, onto the land.... And a search for "sacred place." Places that draw us magnetically and even surrealistically to a spot where we are at rest, and so can be most effective in what we do in this life. Our 'Home' and our work in the natural-geographic world:

### SACRED SPACE

The lake in the room of death  
is on fire.

The tiger is eating my legs.  
And the desert is quiet  
now with the memory of  
my blood.

On the avenues at night  
women are calling my name.  
"Love," they shout  
from the corners of the house of lights—

What if God were governor  
of these states?  
How would the stars in our dreams  
or the eyes of Isis dance  
in the memories of police?  
Too many cars in my blood!  
Somewhere is a piece of land where  
all of silence plays drum.  
Where greed is a shade of blue  
each night that covers my sleep.  
And lust is the gift of milk  
from a goat.  
These traces are like the silhouette of lightning  
in hands.  
The eyes of a brick.  
Or the sacred spot  
where eventually everything stands....

## LOOKING FOR LAND

Fast as the fool's trace  
whispers  
over high hills,  
I try to buy land.  
O, what a clown would  
come into this place  
so long  
looking for blood!

How can any man Own a piece of the earth!

A week too late,  
the silver goes back  
into the pockets of our ancient lives.  
And the land  
our children would love  
thickens  
as we walk away,  
Empty.  
Feet tired.  
Our hearts as heavy and as brittle as rust,  
in leaving behind  
this special place to die.

Grounded and centered in a place on Earth, on the earth, and once we are "Home" (earth-wise) we begin what friend Gary Snyder calls "the real work." A kind of work which is companion to destiny, self-sufficiency, and the key to health. Here, work is the regional harmonizer of the inner and outer worlds. A service to self, to one's family, to community, and finally, to the 'family of Man.'

### OCCAM'S RAZOR

for Wendell Berry

"Work is the health of love."

The best path.

Something as simple as wood.

As wild

as a tree. Or

the perfect essence of space—

These ways.

Like the magic of hands:

gone, without trace....

In a small world,

I live with the things I grow.

Careful of what comes.

Letting nothing go.

And after the 'real work' comes pattern of health and habit, come the first glimpses of:

### THE PERFECT WORK!

Love is the perfect work.

A music which rings all the bells in the temple.

A special wind in the trees—

Listen to the way the drummer hits  
lovingly his drum.

The way the dancer moves  
over the warm earth.

And watch as children  
leave their bodies behind on the old logs  
around the fire and sing!

The world is aglow in the shadows of the  
children singing. Of the sticks against

wood. Of the heavy silent breathing of the old ones  
who sit off to the sides of the circle and pray.

When I am at work in my garden  
I take off my shoes. I let  
my other hands embrace dirt.  
I plant myself in this place.  
And knowing what love is, I  
awake. In this place in my body.  
Full of dream music,  
Full of light!

In the words of Thomas Merton: "No man is an island." And after work we look to our families and those who will become extended family and community in their most meaningful sense. And our sense of self and region grows, expands beyond our visions of singularity, towards a realization of communion and Oneness with all peoples, and all living things:

## LEVITATION

How easily the old table moves  
to the touch of our family of hands.  
Alone, or in pairs  
we only gather here to partake in the ritual of food.  
Travelers in the history of a day's work.

Only on special evenings at those perfect times  
each year when we all meet  
do the spoons and bowls get their chance  
to dance. And the still and starry night  
outside those ancestral rooms sits cross-legged  
in the lotus of the heavens in trance—

With age we learn to rise above our needs.  
To make do with a good meal and a wish.  
To watch carefully how the pendulum swings  
in the corner on the old clock. And  
the way the candle flickers from its own breath  
on an evening without wind.

For a million years we have gathered like this  
around tables made of rock and of wood.  
In families. Raising our voices in prayer.  
Talking to the men and women of night. Until

the sun comes up over the mountains.  
And we dream of perfect islands of love,  
and are there....

Just as poetry in the healing aspect of language, so is it important that we look to our bodies and minds with regard to health and well-being. To focus our personal and collective goals on the *quality* and longevity of existence. And our original and natural 'birthright,' beyond death. It is here that the healing aspects of 'the creative' serve to insure our sense of perfection through longevity and the continuation of an affirming and vital future:

### FOR THE FEATHERS IN THE HEALER'S FAN

"Any idea, person, or object can be a Medicine Wheel, a Mirror for man. The tiniest flower can be such a Mirror, as can a wolf, a story, a touch, a religion or a mountaintop."

—Hyemeyohsts Storm

This is the one that flies.  
the one with wings  
with every man's heart in its hand.  
And this one is wind.  
The one that breathes,  
the holy breath that moves through all things—

This is the one that cares. The soothing blue  
in the dusk of every eye.  
And this, the flame. The fire gone  
wild in the streets of wild dance.  
The seam in the blouse of night—  
This is the one that dreams.  
Kisses stolen from the rain. Or the voice  
within books.

This is the one that cries.  
Water from the moon. On tables for those who pray  
and weep for their meals.  
And this one sings!  
New songs to the planet Earth. Of new death,  
new life, and new birth—

This is the one that heals. Heaven's hands  
reaching down from the drumbeats of space.

Light from the wheel.  
Dressed up in the fashions of grace....

And which one is this, hiding  
behind all the other feathers in the fan?  
It is the one that dies. The one that tunes his bow  
to the strings of death. Who take lightly the lives  
of all trembling and arrogant men.  
And like the one that flies, comes back.  
To live again!

for Hawk Littlejohn

The rest are the ones that dance.  
In the shadows of the healer's full moon fire.  
At the edge of the lake. Its blood beating  
time on the tambourine shore. To each dancer and dance  
sculpting the sand with their dreams.  
Ringing longevity's bells.  
From the rope within!

Our journey around the sacred circle of life brings us, finally into the forest of the region of universal consciousness and awareness. A place where the big trees grow. The hiding places of the unknown, and the "beyond." What we do here depends upon what we have done with where we have been before. How we have built and completed the foundation work in the previous experiences of our journey. Here among the virgin trees we bring our awareness of who we are into relationship with the universal scale of the spiritual-physical marriage shared inherently in the concept of the God-realized Oneness amongst all things. And we have come, full circle, to our true beginnings, and as a result of the perfect work, we're....

### ...GOING HOME

Suppose everything we know  
is false.  
Our bodies are not our bodies. Rivers not  
rivers. And air not really air—  
But something else.

Imagine the world as a shadow  
of another life.  
Where there are no sweet smells of food cooking.  
And no food. Where there are lovers

kissing. And no lips. And no lovers.  
Where there is no such thing as darkness  
or light. Only eyes....

The dream we imagine to be our lives,  
is just that: a dream.  
Each of us is a drop of water. A part  
of an endless sea.

When we are swimming in that ocean, we become that sea.  
Only when we walk out of that sea  
are we alone,  
and are bound to the limits of this life.

The sound of waves reaches the ears of the unborn Child, asleep.  
Yet, there is no sound. The ringing the shepherd hears  
in the high meadow, from the bells  
around the necks of each of his sheep, is a wonderful music!  
Yet, there are no bells—

We are all working our way back to The Sea.  
Where everything lives. Nothing exists.  
And we're Free!

## FALL FROM GRACE

Fall is the season of the poem!  
The cold breeze of the mind  
as it talks to the earth  
in the language of fallen leaves—

Where I to have but one name for the changing trees  
it would be "God."

Where I to have but one bowl for my morning rice  
it would be made of wood.  
Where I to have but one path  
through the woods to the place where I go to pray  
it would be along the stream.

Where I to have but one robe to keep this body warm  
it would be made of the finest wool!

No matter where we go to be alone,  
beauty if living there too.  
The way excellence stands guard  
at the door of a poor man as if he were rich.

When I say to the woman I love, "I love you"  
all she hears is the voice of my pain.  
It is when I reach for her hand that my heart speaks!

What is summer saying to this fall!  
Is it some sweet goodbye?  
Is it the list of names  
winter is wearing in the hidden seams of its coat?  
Or the lullaby of an ancient kiss?

It is this:  
From the seed that once gave birth to the tree,  
to the tree we will return and embrace.  
Each year. Aa fallen leaves.  
From grace!

## SEED

'The true pulse of Man is the same  
as any vegetable grown from seed.'

From hands that have learned to scratch the  
soil like another skin,  
the seed slips into the wounded earth.  
Like the prophet who lays down by water  
and begins to dream....  
the seed begins to take on new life.

## WE ARE ALL SEEDS!

A piece of grain  
between the forefinger and the thumb of God.  
The cold fire of night  
that gives life to the soul of dying wood.  
And the voice of rain, as light,  
as it enters and make love to the earth.

How wonderful that this small round seed could grow  
into the majesty of a great tree!  
Into the face of a flower.  
Or the sweet taste of something to eat.

## WE ARE ALL SEEDS!

Circles  
reflecting rainbows 'round the sun.  
Where a smile is brother to a sister's kiss.  
And prayer is the lodge  
we will one day know as peace.  
Growing from the prophet's dream of the garden.  
Becoming the forests and fields.

Infecting the old mountains with Life!



ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC

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# The Spirit of the Blue Ridge

by  
*Gilbert Leebrick*

"The images in this exhibition share a feeling of spirit which is unique unto the Appalachian Mountains and the Blue Ridge Parkway. This spirit is an underlying force of this land we cherish."

The Blue Ridge Parkway, as it winds its way through the Southern Appalachian Mountains, affords infinite potential for the making of five photographic images. The unique structure of the parkway allows for uninterrupted involvement with both "nature" and the landscape. Nature is defined literally as rocks, flowers, clouds, salamanders, and the like. The landscape of which nature is a part, encompasses artifact, ideology, history, and aesthetic and displays us as cultures. Nature, the primodal force, generates creative energy and connects us as humans to a more universal system. Landscape is symbolic, both a vision of the "real" world and an artifact concerning ideologies.

Photography is a medium of visual communication. This dictates that something is communicated when the photographic image is made and viewed. The message might be as simple as the documentation of a family on their summer vacation along the Parkway or as complex as a personal symbol of a moment of connection to nature. Photography may be used to document, to exaggerate, or to relay feelings as well as ideas. Photography has the potential to communicate the non-visual as well as the visual.

The photographs included in the exhibition are of the latter category. They have less concern with particular geographic locations and unique natural phenomena. The images were made to communicate a feeling as well as a concept of the forces working in nature, the forces that are nature that are unique unto the Parkway.

As one does when lying on a hilltop viewing the clouds, certain symbols, and, at times, anthropomorphic designs are gestalted. Very often these visual realizations trigger a feeling or understanding of personal and cultural connections with nature. Eastern philosophers use the word "satori" for such an experience. Images created during such experiences have the ability to communicate this energy to the viewer in a literal as well as a nonliteral manner.

Landscape and nature are not synonymous but the photographic image may communicate the less tangible aspects of nature through the concepts of landscape.

## NOTES ON THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The exhibition photographs were printed from 4x5 and 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  size negatives made on Kodak Tri-X film exposed at 200 ASA and developed in Kodak HC110 developer. Various developing times were used in order to compress or exaggerate contrasts for creative reasons.

The prints were made on Oriental Seagull Paper, developed in a two bath system and archivally processed and mounted for permanence.

The University of North Carolina operates the Appalachian Environmental Arts Center, a facility dedicated to creating a visual and verbal dialogue among the arts, sciences, and humanities concerning the natural environment. To this end, the center sponsors classes, workshops, lectures, exhibitions, and produces educational media.

The photographs were made by Gilbert Leebrick, Associate Director of the Appalachian Environmental Arts Center.

The following chosen photographs represent Leebrick's conference exhibition:

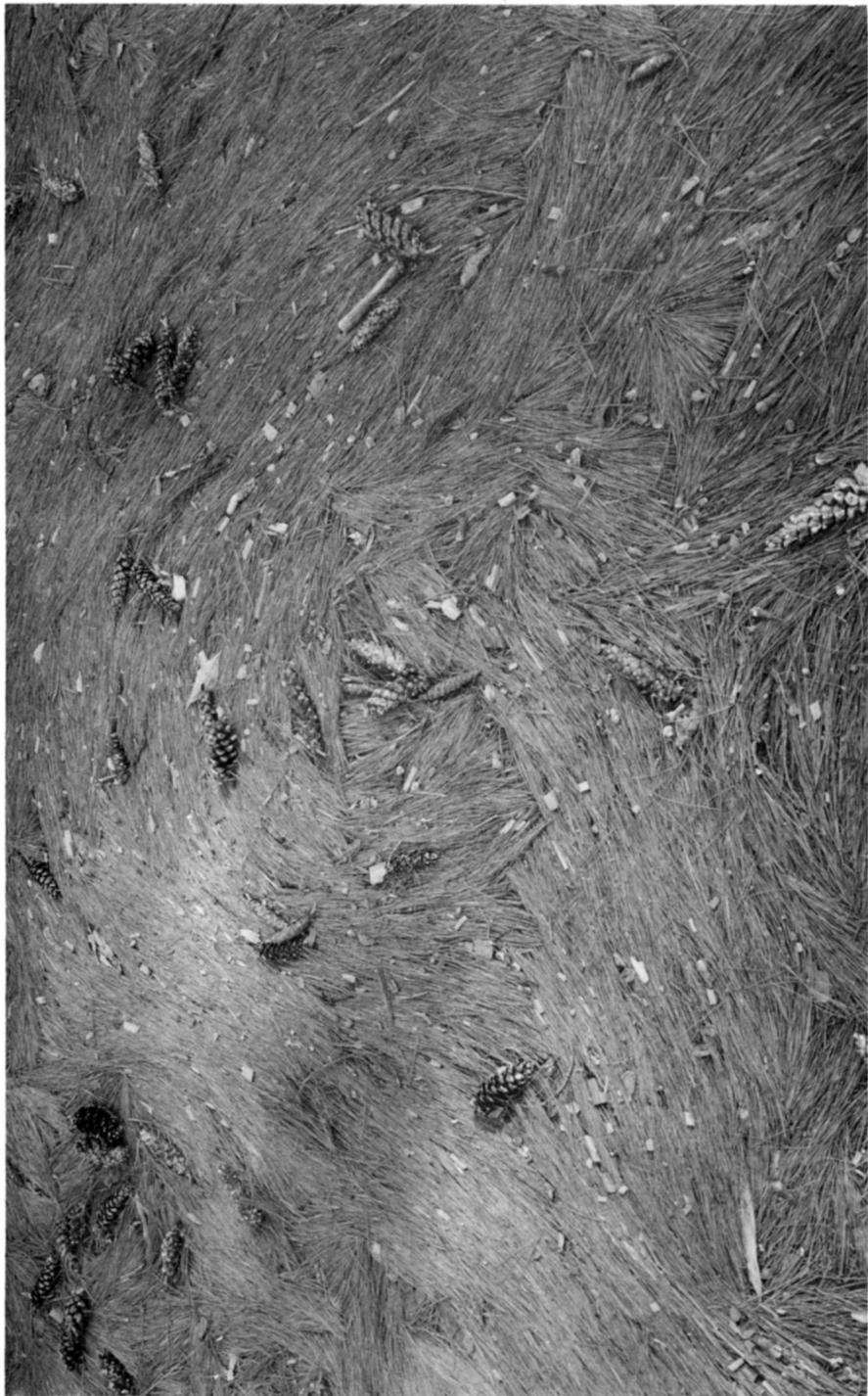




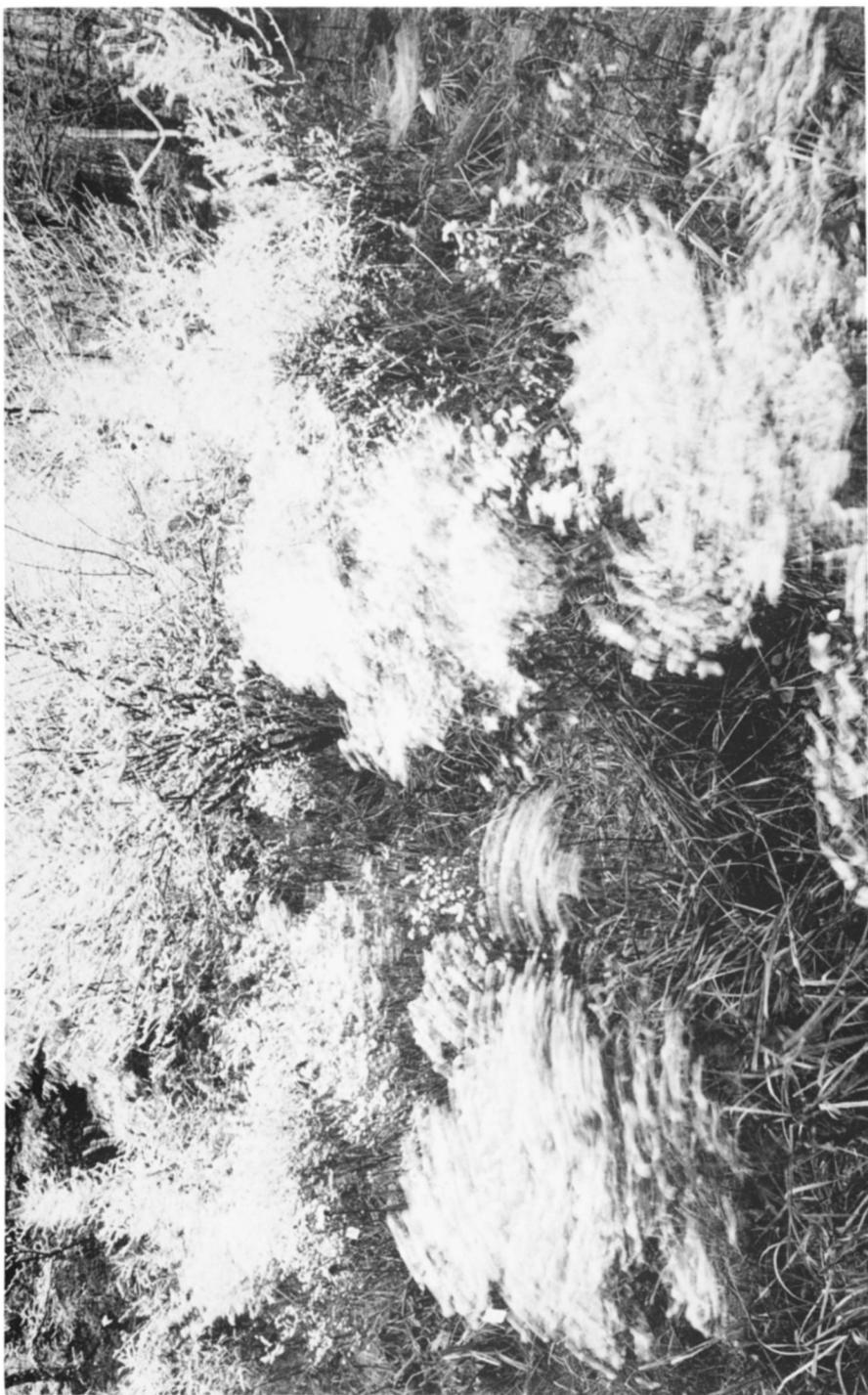


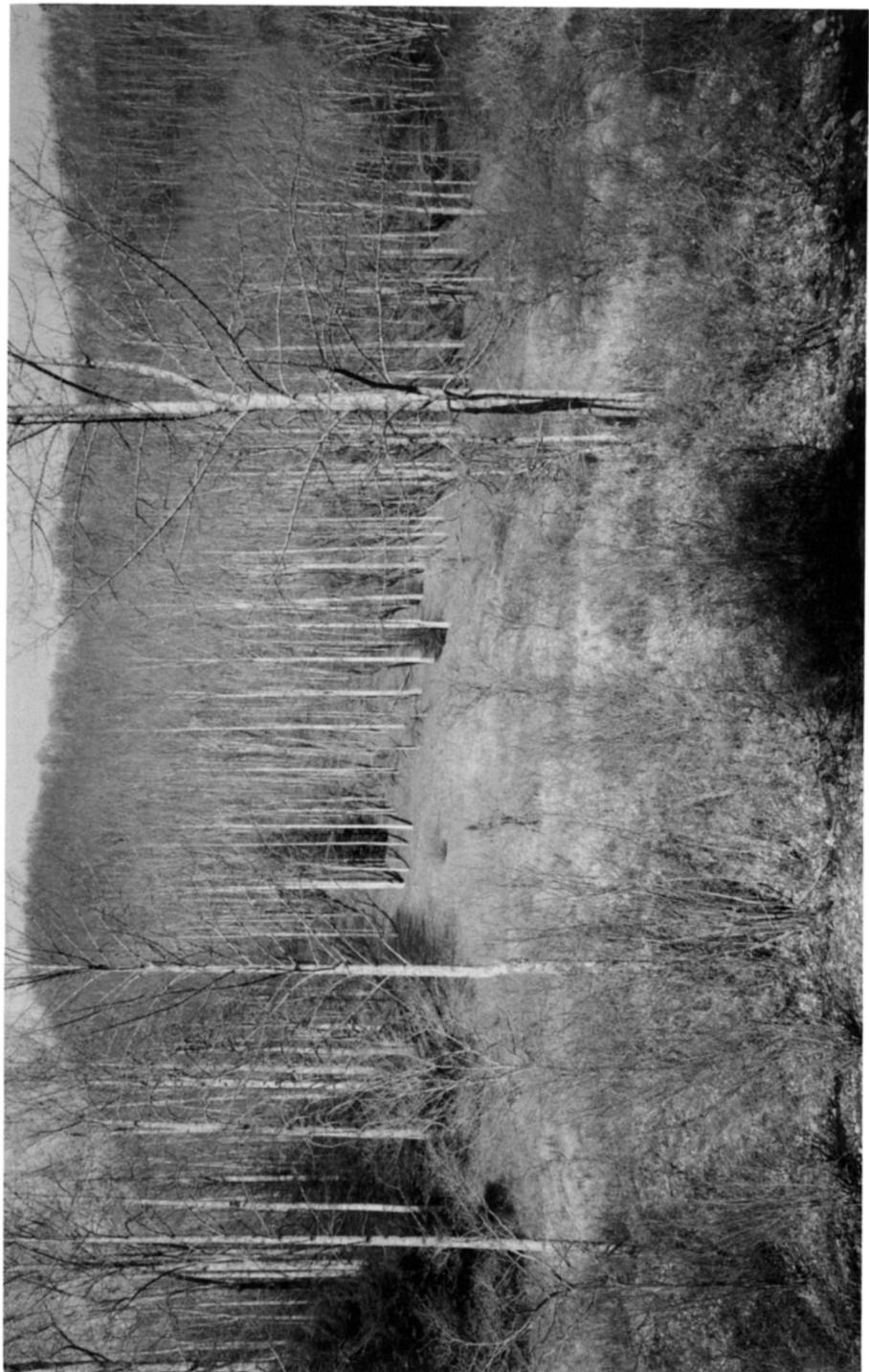












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# Land Use Attitudes of Rural Residents

by  
*James F. Shepherd*

## Introduction

Research has shown that more people are migrating to rural areas from urban ones. This urban-to-rural migration is termed turnaround migration and the concept has become widely accepted in the United States (Wellman 1980).

This migration trend is causing both a physical and social change in the rural landscape. Urban residents have been moving to rural areas for many years, but until recently, the physical composition of the rural landscape went unnoticed (Healy and Short 1981). Now the physical change of the rural landscape is more apparent. Rural landowners are selling off their land holdings to urban transplants and large corporations (Stephenson 1984). Rural family farms are being divided into smaller residential tracts, large recreational developments or extractive industries. The rural native now has a group of "invaders" in close proximity (Healy and Short 1981). In some incidences he or she has sold his or her home in the hollows and valleys and purchased another home (sometimes a mobile home) along the highway corridor (Stephenson 1984). J.B. Jackson (1970) calls these highways the "social landscape" and directs attention to the changing development along them.

Rural areas are now composed of a variety of residents from different social and economic backgrounds. Because of this variety, potential for social conflict exists. One possible social conflict is the difference in attitudes regarding land use and objectives for the rural landscape. Planners and sociologists believe a better understanding of the impact of urban migration on the rural landscape is needed. In an effort to help reach a better understanding of the impact of urban migration on the rural landscape is needed. In an effort to help reach a better understanding, this research studies the attitudes toward land use of current residents in one rural area beginning to experience turnaround migration. The rural area was Grayson County, Virginia.

## Rationale for Study

Landscape Architects and planners must reach a better understanding of the attitudes and potential for social conflicts in rural areas to evaluate their plans and decisions for the rural landscape more effectively and sensitively. This is of particular importance to the planners and landscape architects who make decisions about the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Blue Ridge Parkway transverses many rural counties while introducing urban visitors

or potential residents to rural communities. Most of the migrants to rural areas have previous ties to the area through relatives, friends or travels. Some of the newcomers in Grayson county discovered the area by traveling the Blue Ridge Parkway. This is significant when considering that the Parkway only passes through the extreme southeastern tip of the County.

It is vital to reach a better understanding of potential social conflicts in rural areas that went to retain their rural quality of life (Wellman 1980). Very often we tend to generalize about the attitudes of rural residents. Unless research is done, an important aspect of these issues is left to generalizations and assumptions. True feelings and attitudes residents have toward land use are seldom realized by planners and landscape architects.

## Method and Study Area

To obtain the attitudes of rural residents regarding land use, I have conducted ethnographic interviews. All the interviews were tape-recorded. Five basic groups of residents were found in Grayson County. First, the residents were divided into native or non-native categories. From these two categories, residents could fall into one of three subcategories: (1) Retirees or summer home resident (2) Counterculturist (3) Movers and Shakers. Some residents remained only in a native or non-native category, while others fell into a combination of categories. Movers and Shakers are the most influential people in the community. A list of these leaders was provided by the local newspaper (*The Declaration* 1984) and was starting point for my interviews. My grandfather, who is now 85 years old and a native of Grayson County, provided another starting point for native and non-native informants, particularly in the western section of the County. A "snowball" technique of interviewing was employed. After each informant was interviewed, they were asked to recommend other possible informants. At this time twenty interviews have been completed and interviews are still being conducted.

Grayson County, Virginia is an area just beginning to experience turnaround migration. Riley (1977) believes it is best to study an area where new principles for the rural landscape will have the potential to create the most change. These are regions with few people, where present poverty exists in a landscape of underdeveloped richness (Riley 1977). Grayson County, Virginia is a rural area appropriate for such a study.

The 1980 Census data indicated that Grayson County had a population of 16,679. A 7.4 percent increase in population occurred within the ten years period between the 1970 and 1980 census. This increase is significant for Grayson County because from the 1940's the County has seen a steady out-migration and a loss in population (Comprehensive Plan, Grayson County, Virginia 1980).

## Reason for Turnaround Migration

Although each rural area possesses unique characteristics, rural sociologists and planners cite several common factors which contribute to turnaround migration (Schiefelbien 1977, Schwarzweller 1979, Stephenson 1984, Zube 1974, Healy and Short 1981, Dubbink 1984):

- Industries locate in rural areas providing employment.
- Transportation and highway systems are improved.
- A great number of national parks and recreational areas are created.
- Dissatisfaction with the urban environment attracts many retirees, recreationists and persons seeking a different lifestyle.
- Development of residential areas in a variety of price ranges makes rural areas more accessible to a larger economic market.

Some of these same factors are contributing to the start of turnaround migration in Grayson County. More employment stability has been provided to the county by an exercise equipment manufacturer (Nautilus) locating in the town of Independence. Grayson County is the home of the Mount Rogers National Recreational Area, Grayson Highlands State Park and also the headwaters for the scenic New River. Low density of population, a clean environment, and an abundance of natural beauty have attracted many retirees and persons seeking a different lifestyle to the County.

## Others Studies

Most of the literature concerning urban-to-rural migration describes the characteristics of the newcomers. Generally, urban-to-rural migrants are younger and of higher socioeconomic status than the rural populations they are joining (Schiefelbein 1977). Because of the difference between the natives and non-natives, numerous social conflicts may occur. Among the social conflicts which have been suggested are: competition for jobs, change in rural social stratification, conflicts of culture and life-style, and conflicts over growth and economic development.

Several studies have looked at specific points of possible social conflicts within changing rural communities and have reached various conclusions. Ploch (1978) studied the possibility of conflicts concerning competition for jobs in rural Maine. The newcomers, having more formal education and higher occupational status than the natives, were not job competitive. In fact, the newcomers tended to stimulate the local economy by reviving existing small businesses and creating new ones which attracted tourism. Also, no support for the "job scarcity" hypothesis was found by Price and Clay (1980) in their study of turnaround migration in rural Michigan.

Growth and development preferences among urban migrants and rural natives have been issues in several studies. Many rural sociologists reason that the urban migrant is escaping the negative aspects of cities or living

out a passion for small town or rural life. These migrants should seek to preserve the rural character of their new residence. This reasoning has been referred to as the "gangplank" or "last settler" syndrome. Voss (1980) found that the majority of both newcomers and older residents favored growth. Later he found urban migrants no less interested in growth and development than established residents of the upper Great Lakes region (1980). Ploch (1978) anticipated conflicts over growth, but found little evidence to support this view. Rather, he found that native people and newcomers to rural towns in Maine had a shared interest in preserving the ruralness of their towns. Dubbink (1984) studied the towns of San Juan Capistrano and Bolinas, California. He found that Bolinas attracted the counterculturists of the 1960's hippie's movement. San Juan Capistrano attracted retired persons. In both of these towns he found a direct relationship between duration of residence and attitudes toward growth. Dubbink (1984) also found that both natives and newcomers wanted to preserve the ruralness of the towns, but they had different concepts as to what was "rural". The newcomers' concept of rural centered on the landscape and open spaces, while the native person's concept focused on lifestyle (Dubbink 1984).

Many potential social conflicts which could occur as a result of turnaround migration were included in a study conducted by Marans and Wellman (1978) in the upper Great Lakes region of Michigan. They found that social conflicts caused by turnaround migration in their study region appeared unlikely. Newcomers and established residents had minimal differences in terms of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, satisfaction with local services, and attitude toward growth and development. Outdoor recreation participation was the only area showing consistent differences, and it is doubtful that these differences alone would prove to be sources of serious conflict.

In most cases, in-migration to rural areas has brought about some change, usually positive (Dubbink 1984). In a study which is now considered a classic in rural sociology, Vidick and Bensman (1958) determined that change in rural communities is often a result of newcomers. All of the reviewed studies suggest that turnaround migration will produce different degrees of change in each rural community (Dubbink 1984). Therefore, a study which was conducted in a similar location as the study area for my research would be beneficial to examine. Stephenson (1984) conducted a study of in-migration to the Western counties of North Carolina which are geographically near Grayson County, Virginia.

Stephenson (1984) compared native and non-native residents in his study of "Shiloh", North Carolina. He first looked at "Shiloh" in 1965 and then again in 1980. He found some distinctive differences in the "Shiloh" community within the 15 years. What he found in 1980 was a town settled mostly with persons whose origins were outside of North Carolina. The tax records told an important story. "Seventy-eight percent of the town's increase in

population was made up of non-natives" (Stephenson 1984). Stephenson (1984) interviewed many newcomers as well as natives and found that attitudes toward land use and social issues varied. However, he found the main attitude of the community was one of "muted tolerance, a keeping of distance, a muted disdain" (Stephenson 1984).

## Results and Discussion

Although my interviews are still being conducted, trends and patterns among the different residents of Grayson County have already begun to appear. In Grayson County in-migration may help provide jobs and boost the local economy. One migrant from Brooklyn, New York has started a natural food store in the town of Independence. The local newspaper in Independence was purchased by an outsider who now boasts the longest single ownership within the past twenty years. Perhaps, the best known new business is the Troutdale Dining Room. The owner is from New York City and is capitalizing on the current "rural chic" movement. Customers come from the immediate area and around the state, but not too many of the older native people dine here. They do admire the owner's ambition for this business endeavor.

One issue found to cause a great deal of frustration in Grayson County is the fate of the County's 1903 Courthouse. A new courthouse was built and the former Board of Supervisors never made a decision about what to do with the old one. The present four-member Board of Supervisors has been deadlocked for four years over the issue. Finally, the Independence Town Council passed a historic zoning ordinance in an effort to save the courthouse. The overwhelming majority of the persons interviewed thought the courthouse should be saved. Reasons for two Board members wanting to tear the old courthouse down go deeper than simple economics. First, the present Board "inherited" the controversial issue from their predecessors. Second, they perhaps feel some resentment by having their authority lessened by newcomers instigating the issue. Although the issue has been the cause of a great deal of frustration, it has tended to make County residents more united by causing awareness of historic structures and community image.

A similar issue was studied by Graber (1974) in Georgetown, Colorado where an historic preservation districting board started by newcomers had a great deal of influence on the growth of the community. The issues which concerned this board were found to unite the town.

For the most part, everyone interviewed stressed the need for some type of industrial growth. This seems to be the number one priority for this County which is still very poor. However, the majority of both the newcomers and natives think this should be controlled growth. Both groups want to preserve the ruralness of the County while promoting growth. There are differences in the degree of growth which the groups of residents will accept. Movers

and Shakers are the most eager to accept industrial growth. Newcomers were willing to accept growth, but stressed controlled growth the most strongly. Older natives saw the need for industrial growth, but were the least opinionated as to the level of control. Recent retirees expressed the strongest opposition to industrial growth. If industrial growth does come to Grayson County it will probably be limited to the eastern section of the County near the town of Independence. Mountainous roads and rugged topography would make it difficult to locate industry elsewhere.

The strongest issue for native people has been the taking of land by the forest service to create the Mt. Rogers National Recreational Area. Natives feel strongly about this issue because the federal land acquisition disrupted a lifestyle and rural community they once knew. They see land not being used in the way it once was. People they knew were forced to move, their houses were torn down and their barns burned. The land has been left "to grow up" as one native woman said. Land that was once used for many agricultural purposes is now left to produce only its natural beauty.

An example of the native attitude of wanting to keep land in its former rural uses was demonstrated by my grandfather. One question asked of everyone interviewed was whether or not they plan to sell some or all of their property. My grandfather recently sold ten acres of his property. This is land where his old home once stood. He was asked if the land had too much sentimental value to sell to a newcomer. He said that he would prefer to sell it rather than let the land grow up because he could no longer maintain it.

My grandfather's former property joins a very beautiful area of the county. It is called Brier Ridge because of the berry briars which grow here. My mother has told me stories of picking wash tubs of blackberries and taking them to the store to sell when she was a girl. Years ago, native residents did not concern themselves very much with who owned Brier Ridge or other land in the County. For example, if they wanted to hunt in the forest, they did so without the government telling them when and how to do so.

Now a newcomer has bought all the land on Brier Ridge and has built five houses there for relatives. Native people in the area are glad to see this happen. They think the land is being used for a good purpose, since there were once houses there. The man who now owns most of Brier Ridge seems very interested in preserving the ruralness and beauty of the area. He has also made an effort to become involved in the lifestyles of the native people who are his new neighbors.

The following summarizes the results of this study. First, native residents and newcomers have shared interest in preserving the ruralness of Grayson County. Second, both groups understand the necessity of industrial growth for a poor County. Third, the native person's perception of "rural" is in terms of their own past lifestyle, while the newcomer's perception of rural is based more in terms of the landscape and preconceived ideas of rural life gained

through secondary sources. Fourth, at this time there is little social conflict between natives and non-natives as a result of turnaround migration. Newcomers are seeking out natives in order to gain acceptance or out of necessity for survival. Natives are welcoming newcomers who show a willingness to learn their skills and traditions.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Slow development may be one of the County's greatest assets. Grayson County still has its best commodity; its rural character and unsoiled natural beauty. Therefore, Grayson County is in a fortunate position: the County may learn from other rural areas which have experienced a greater degree of turnaround migration. A likely direction for Grayson County's future is along the same line as counties in Western North Carolina (Comprehensive Plan, Grayson County, Virginia 1980). Stephenson's (1984) research in "Shiloh", North Carolina is a study from which Grayson County can learn. Stephenson found a much greater degree of social conflict between newcomers and natives than was found in Grayson County. Perhaps the biggest reason why this social conflict was not found in Grayson County to the degree it was in "Shiloh" was that Western North Carolina has known a much higher degree of in-migration. Also, the newcomers in Stephenson's study area did not seek out the native people as they do in Grayson County. Therefore, as in-migration increases in Grayson County, efforts to encourage positive social interaction between newcomers and natives should be encouraged.

The fact that newcomers are making an effort to become involved in the rural community in Grayson County is an important discovery of this study. A major factor in native acceptance of newcomers is that as a result of massive out-migration in the 1950's and 1960's the County was left with few young people to carry on the traditions and skills of the native people. As a result, when a newcomer makes the effort to befriend an older native, they are warmly accepted and both benefit greatly.

Based on studies and observations in Grayson County some recommendations may be proposed. Perhaps the most important recommendation is for the County to increase rural community development efforts. Over the years Grayson County has lost its sense of community. Now with a decrease in out-migration and an increase in in-migration, the social and physical future of Grayson County is uncertain.

In Grayson County, as in other rural areas, community development would mean economic development. There is a tendency in this country to apply big business solutions to agriculture and rural areas even though evidence suggests these solutions are not working. Culture is the root of agriculture and rural communities. Community development would be the best economic development that a rural area such as Grayson County could undertake.

This study in Grayson County has shown that the residents have shared interest in retaining the ruralness of the County, while realizing that some growth is needed. The native residents' perception of ruralness is similar to that found in Dubbink's (1984) study of two California towns. Native residents regard ruralness in terms of their past lifestyle. In an effort to retain this lifestyle, community development is needed. Newcomers need to be educated in the cultural aspects of the area they are joining. Natives need to know that their skills and tradition are valued and appreciated.

Planners and designers will be asked to help solve the problems of rural areas as in-migration increases. They must understand attitudes of both natives and newcomers in order to make the best possible plans and decisions for the rural landscape. This is of particular importance to the planners and landscape architects of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Blue Ridge Parkway continues to change and affect the rural areas which it transverses. Landscape architects for the Blue Ridge Parkway must gain a better understanding of the attitudes of native and newcomers which the Parkway brings. This better understanding is needed so that the Parkway may continue to expose urban residents to a traditional rural landscape.

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# Environmental Quality Points

by  
*Scott S. Weinberg*

## INTRODUCTION:

In 1969 the Environmental Policy Act was passed by the Congress and was signed into law on January 1, 1970. The purpose of the law was to "declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man." This was indeed a giant step forward, helping man and his environment become equals. In over a decade, the EPA has had some success and some failure. One of the major problems is that it can take months or even years for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be written. The statement in itself is a very complex document. It should include the following divisions: A statement of objective, technological possibilities for achieving the objective, an environmental characterization report prior to initiation of action, alternate engineering plans, identification of impact, assessment of impact and recommendations. The EPA is an effective way of controlling man's dominance over the natural environment on the federal level. Although some states have enacted laws similar to the federal EPA, many states have no legislation in this area.

The state of Georgia is approximately two thirds tree covered. Since Georgia is considered a "Sun Belt State", the anticipated growth pattern points to a rapid rate of growth. This means that more building will be taking place in the state at a rate faster than past years. With this influx of development, what will happen to the native trees? Can the state afford to disregard the natural aspects that add much to the overall character of the state? Can we afford to see thousands of acres of trees destroyed and not replaced?

At the smaller level of government in the state, the city, town, or county, we see that there are few if any guidelines that consider the environment when thinking about development at this scale. Realistically, one must first consider that a business (or a group of businesses) moving into a local municipality is a positive step forward for the local area. It means an increase in jobs and taxes. This alone is generally sufficient reason for granting zoning changes and building permits.

The question that I have concerns the impact of locating the structure(s) on a specific site. What happens to the trees that are removed to make way for the building or parking lot? What about the removal of a home for the native animals that inhabit the site? As a landscape architect, I feel that a device to measure the impact and suggest alternatives is necessary. A device

must be simple and easy to use, an efficient device. Not something like the EPA on the federal level, but a device that can be used by local municipalities *without* the need for a professional on staff. Need requires a device that can be used quickly and effectively at the smallest levels of government.

This type of device will let a community grow and still provide for stewardship of the environment. The method is quite simple and local governments can adapt and use the system in a matter of days. The method is called Environmental Quality Points (EQP). Using a system which employs EQP, a particular site, is inventoried for plant materials. This inventory generates a given number of points. The points are standardized for the state. The points were established by a panel of six professors, specialists in horticulture and landscape architecture, at the University of Georgia.

## Objectives

The main objective is to provide a system where an appreciation of the environment *can coexist* with local development. The primary reasons for the study are:

1. To provide a system where parts of the natural environment can be replaced if damaged or destroyed.
2. To provide a system which will perpetuate the tree cover in the state of Georgia.
3. To provide local governments with a device that can lead to coexistence between development and the environment.
4. To provide a system that can erase erosion problems associated with development.
5. To provide a system that encourages conservation of existing materials.
6. To provide a tool to aid in the site analysis process.

## How It Works

It may be helpful for a complete understanding of how the EQP will function to provide an example. It is important to remember at this point that the example is totally hypothetical.

The site is in Athens, Georgia. The site is a small parcel of land, about 2.4 acres in size. A Corporation is looking at the site to decide if it would be a good parcel of land for locating a restaurant. The architect on the site determines, from past experience, that most sites require a minimum of 2.5 acres for building and parking. Although the site falls about one tenth of an acre short, the location has excellent potential. The development of this piece of property by the Corporation will mean complete destruction of the natural landscape. The site is fairly diversified. It contains both heavy concentrations of trees and open spaces.

Once the Corporation purchases the site and before a building permit

will be issued, an inventory of the site must be made, and a total number of EQP must be assigned to the site. As the second step, the new owners will submit their plan to the city showing the method that they will use to develop the property and replace the destroyed number of points.

The inventory of the site and the points each item is assigned are:

PLANT NAME	EQP (a)	QTY (b)	SIZE	SIZE FACTOR (c)	EXTENSION (axbxc)
White Oak	9	8	3"	1	72
White Oak	9	2	7"	2.33	41.94
Red Bud	7	18	7'	1	126
Dogwood	10	3	10'	1.6	48
Mt. Laurel	8	19	3'	1	152
Red Maple	9	3	3"	1	27
Water Oak	7	12	2"	.66	55.44
Total Site EQP Value					522.38

In this example you can see that a total of 522.38 EQP will be destroyed. It will be up to the developer of the property to obtain a landscape design with a minimum of 522.38 points before a building permit will be issued.

## HOW TO USE THE EQP SYSTEM

- STEP 1 Prepare a basic inventory of the selected site. Using the sheets provided, list *only* the plants that *will be destroyed* by the proposed development. List the size and quantity of the materials. The quantity column is considered column "b".
- STEP 2 Locate each plant that is listed on the inventory sheet in the section marked "Assigned EQP". Find the assigned value for each plant and write it in under the EQP column of the inventory. That column is considered column "a".
- STEP 3 After locating the EQP it is necessary to use a figure that relates size of the plant in the inventory. This is called the "size Factor." Locate the Size Factor for each plant and write it in under the column marked Size Factor. This column is considered column "c". These figures can be found at the beginning of each section of plant materials. Be careful to use only the size factor that relates to the plant materials in the individual sections.
- STEP 4 After all columns on the inventory sheet have been filled out, multiply columns a x b x c. This will give the extension value for each of the plants listed on the sheet. It takes into consideration the EQP, the size and the quantity of each plant. After do-

ing this, add up all the extension values. This yields the *total EQP* for the site.

STEP 5 Prepare a landscape plan for the site. Once the plan is completed, use the plant schedule to fill out the inventory sheet. Using the same steps (1-4), prepare an estimate of the EQP for the total site based on the planting plan. The planting plan must replace the same total EQP as would be destroyed by the proposed development.

## SYSTEM EVALUATION

In order to evaluate the system and its practical application, two sites in Athens, Georgia were selected. The first project site was to have a bank building located and assigned, and the second site was a single family residential lot. One of the major concerns was the cost to the developer or homeowner of implementing the system. It was felt in order for the system to be advocated by the design professionals and government agencies it should not force the developer to spend additional funds beyond the "normal" landscape budget. For example, if a developer were to construct a small commercial building and have the building professionally landscaped, the cost should be no more if the EQP system were used.

The first site tested was in East Athens. The site was fairly well vegetated. It contains a mixture of pines, dogwoods, cherries, hawthornes and oaks. Figure 1 is a complete listing of the materials on the site, their respective sizes and their EQP value.

The first step in the testing was an on-site visit. It should be noted that the drawings described were done by two senior level landscape architecture students as part of an advanced planting design class. During the initial visit, the site was measured and plants were located and properly inventoried. On the site that was to house the new bank building, all plant materials were to be removed during construction. The first plan was designed by a student with complete knowledge of the system. The major goal of the design was to have it approach and exceed the 2045.68 EQP points. The first design (see Figure 2) resulted in a site EQP rating of 2067.95 points. Figure 3 shows the complete breakdown of plants, sizes and total points. Comparing this to the total existing EQP rating of 2045.68 it was shown to have replaced, with even a few extra points, the materials that were destroyed. A second plan was done for the site by another student, who was unaware that this was a test for the EQP system. In that plan, the student's design has an EQP value of 2649.89 points. By comparing the fact that more plant materials were being installed by the second student who was unaware of the system than the first who had known of the system, it would be a fair assumption that the cost of the system would not impose any financial hardship on the developer required to provide landscaping for a project.

A similar approach was initiated for the second test site, a small single family residential site. Two plans were first ordered. one plan was completed without the student's knowledge of the EQP system. The other was done with the student knowing how many points were being removed and needed replacing. In this instance a plan was completed with a value of 2375.37 points by the student without knowledge of the system. The second plan was completed by the student with knowledge of the system and contained a total point value of 1788.2 points. The test was again successful since it was under the value of points required by the student with no knowledge of the system and over the basic requirements of the rating of plants removed, which was 1419.4. See Figure 4 for the design and plant listing for the new plant installation.

Although the plans represent only two sites, it has given enough validity to the system to begin using it on a trial basis with further and more extensive testing needed. Along with the need for widespread testing of the system comes recommendations for implementation.

Due to developmental costs and other costs associated with building, the following recommendations regarding the use of the system are made:

1. All commercial and industrial development would be required to replace the damaged or destroyed plant materials at a rate of 100% of the inventory.
2. Developers of subdivisions and housing (single family only) would not be required to replace plants that are removed from streets, right of ways and for the basic area of the footprint of the house +10 feet. All other materials would be replaced at 100% of the EQP rating.
3. Single family homeowners building their own homes would not be required to replace materials that fall within the building +20 feet of the house. All other materials would be replaced at a figure of 50% of the EQP rating.
4. Developers of multi-family housing would not have to replace the materials located in roadways or right of ways. They would be required to replace materials located in parking areas and the building footprints along with all other damaged and/or destroyed materials.

## Conclusion

The main objective of this study is stated in a previous section is "to provide a system where appreciation of the environment can coexist with local development." The system does work to meet the main objective of the study. The system functions to replace materials from the natural landscape so development can take place and at the same time maintain the quality of the overall landscape.

Originally, the system of Environmental Quality Points was developed

with the idea that the system could be incorporated into the legal system of cities, towns and counties and eventually at the state level. After many months of study and testing, it became evident that bringing the system into the legality of land use planning would be very difficult. The major problem with requiring compliance to this type of system deals with taking the "site inventory", figuring out just what plant materials would be damaged or destroyed during the development phase. Some of the methods to circumvent the system were discussed at meetings with the Fulton County Planning Commission and with members of the Macon-Bibb Planning Commission.

With this realization comes the opportunity to use the system in other ways. The first way in which the system could function, and function properly and successfully, is if it were used as a "standard." It could be a method of recommending to developers what the city or other municipality would like the developer to do in order for the developer to obtain the necessary permits. The most important point to make here is that the local government must have some type of landscape ordinance on the books or prepare to have an ordinance developed and passed into law before this "standard" could be used. In this way, a planning office could make it clear that they would readily accept any plans submitted for approval if they follow the basic "guidelines" of the EQP system.

The second method by which this system could be used would be as an "Environmental Ethic." Many landscape architects and conservationists approach a problem trying to conserve as much as possible. This type of device would allow for a system to go beyond the basic conservation ethic and begin to return portions of the built landscape to conditions similar to predevelopment. It is felt that the use of the Environmental Quality Points system as a basis for an environmental ethic for designers could be the most useful purpose of all. (It can assist the designer in development and in redeveloping a sense of original land quality.)

The system also functions to slow down erosion problems which often occur with large scale, and sometimes small scale, development. This is done by requiring that destroyed plants be replaced, which provides erosion protection in most cases.

Environmental Quality Points is a system with great potential. It can serve to perpetuate general environmental quality in an area. The system provides for the rehabilitation of environmental quality destroyed during the construction of most projects. With the ease and basic simplicity of the system, it can serve to protect and enhance the environment.

DATE PREPARED: 3/6/84

PROJECT: INVENTORY - TEST SITE

LOCATION: ATHENS

							All Shrubs: 0
EVERGREEN	EQP	QTY	SIZE	SIZE FACTOR	EXTENSION	TOTAL	
Loblolly Pine							
Loblolly Pine	Pinus Taeda						
	8	66	15+ft.	3.25	1716	1716	All Evergreens: 1716
SMALL TREE	EQP	QTY	SIZE	SIZE FACTOR	EXTENSION	TOTAL	
Dogwood							
Dogwood	Cornus Florida						
	10	1	12 ft.	2	20	20	
Higan (Japanese) Cherry							
Higan (Japanese) Cherry	Prunus Subhirtella						
	8	3	10 ft.	1.6	38.4	38.4	
Higan (Japanese) Cherry							
Higan (Japanese) Cherry	8	4	11 ft.	1.8	57.6	57.6	
Higan (Japanese) Cherry							
	8	10	12 ft.	2	160	160	
							256
Japanese Crabapple							
Japanese Crabapple	Malus Floribunda						
	8	1	10 ft.	1.6	12.8	12.8	
SHADE TREE	EQP	QTY	SIZE	SIZE FACTOR	EXTENSION	TOTAL	ALL SMALL TREES: 288.8
Water Oak							
Water Oak	Quercus Nigra						
	7	8	1 In.	.33	18.48	18.48	
							ALL SHADE TREES: 18.48

TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY POINTS FOR SITE OR PLANTING DESIGN: 2023.28

Fig. 1

DATE PREPARED: 3/6/84  
 PROJECT: DESIGN-TEST SITE  
 LOCATION: ATHENS

SHRUB	EQP	QTY	SIZE	SIZE FACTOR	EXTENSION	TOTAL
Kurmue Azalea			Kurmue Azalea			
Kurmue Azalea	8	122	25-36 in.	1	976	976
Yaupon Holly			Ilex Vomitoria			
Yaupon Holly	9	30	25-36 in.	1	270	270
					ALL SHRUBS:	1246
					ALL EVERGREENS:	0
SMALL TREES	EQP	QTY	SIZE	SIZE FACTOR	EXTENSION	TOTAL
Crape Myrtle			Lagerstroemia Indica			
Crape Myrtle	10	3	8 Ft.	1.2	36	36
Dogwood			Cornus Florida			
Dogwood	10	11	12 Ft.	2	220	220
Sweetbay Magnolia			Magnolia Virginiana			
Sweetbay Magnolia	7	6	10 Ft.	1.6	67.2	67.2
					ALL SMALL TREES:	323.2
SHADE TREE	EQP	QTY	SIZE	SIZE FACTOR	EXTENSION	TOTAL
American Beech			Fungus Grandifolia			
American Beach	9	5	4 in.	1.33	59.85	59.85
Red Maple			Acer Rubrum			
Red Maple	9	10	4 in.	1.33	119.7	119.7
Scarlet Oak			Quercus Coccinea			
Scarlet Oak	10	24	4 in.	1.33	319.2	319.2
					ALL SHADE TREES:	498.75
TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY POINTS FOR SITE OR PLANTING DESIGN: 2067.95						

Fig. 3

# Seasonal Plant Color Change Give the Parkway Its Character

by  
*J. Dan Pittilo*

## INTRODUCTION

Visitors to the Blue Ridge Parkway are attracted primarily to changes in vegetation produced by seasonal influences. This is clearly indicated by the fact that the highest visitation coincides with the most dramatic and visible changes in the vegetation that occurs in October. There are other subtle differences expressed by vegetational changes that subconsciously may be sensed by the Parkway visitor: these differences are the thesis of this essay.

### Vegetation is the Dominant Visual Feature of The Appalachians

Compare the Appalachian Mountains to the younger western mountains and most people will recognize the "subdued," "old," "friendlier" character of the Appalachians. The Rocky Mountains, for example, are twice as high, have massive exposures of jagged rocks, and generally have less vegetative cover. The Rocky Mountain peaks are usually widely spaced and have physical components of the environment such as rocks, soil, etc. more prevalent than the peaks of the plant covered Appalachians.

When one views the landscape in the Rocky Mountains, gray, red, brown, blue, white, or other colors of the rocks, soil, or water are most prominent. At the warmer and lower elevations, dryness may contribute to the presence of bare soil or rock. Above the timberline snowfields become ever more prominent as elevation increases until the highest elevations are covered by snow and ice year-round. In the valleys below where glaciers have scoured out depressions, glacial lakes occur.

In contrast, when one views the Appalachian Mountains, rock, soil, or water accent the ever pervasive cover of vegetation. Even in winter when the plants are generally dormant, their surfaces of twig and bark, or the dead leaves on the forest floor become the most prominent features. Thus, when the vegetation is combined with the physical elements of rock and water, we find the living, dynamic entity we recognize as the "friendly" Appalachians.

When Europeans settled in the Appalachians, they entered a forest dominated landscape. This land was already occupied by the Native Americans—Cherokees—who had carved rather small openings in the forests for their homes, villages, and ceremonial grounds. Therefore, if one were to have stood at any vantage point now occupied by the Blue Ridge

Parkway, the view would have been that of immense expanses of forests with only occasional openings where the Cherokees had their homes in the valleys. Other, more natural openings might have been noted. Perhaps in portions of Virginia and northwestern North Carolina there were meadow openings. These openings would have been prairie-like with grazing by bison, elk, or other plant eating animals. Probably they often were burned by the Native Americans to encourage their life-sustaining game animals. Farther south along the Parkway, in the higher portions of the Blacks, Craggies, Balsams, and Smokies, there were other small forest openings, grass or heath balds and rock outcroppings.

The early settlers entered this region in the late 1700's and began to carve homesteads out of this "wilderness." Forests with their raiding animals and sprouting locusts were perceived as elements of the landscape to be conquered. Ever so slowly these goals were accomplished, with many of the children and grandchildren of these original settlers leaving the rugged hills for the better life in the surrounding plains.

It is this setting, conceived by the visionaries of the Blue Ridge Parkway, that is providing the citizens a glimpse of part of our American heritage. The Parkway route was chosen so that a cross section of both the cultural and natural features of the southern Appalachians would be available for future generations of Americans. With the collecting of those artifacts not yet rusted or rotted and reconstruction of those that were, we now have cultural items such as Mabry's Mill and Brinegar's Cabin. But the survival of the natural landscape is related more to the fact that the organisms have continued to live, reproduce, and grow than it is to our saving parts of this landscape through preservation.

### **Vegetation Is the Living, Dynamic Characteristic of the Appalachian Landscape**

The two physical elements of the Appalachian landscape occupying secondary roles are water and rock. Water is the most active of these two; it exists in two major forms and is mobile in the natural ecosystem. Water actually occurs in three forms; gaseous water vapor, liquid, and solid ice. Because water vapor is invisible to us, except possibly in the combined form that produces haze, we will not consider it here. Liquid water is our most frequently encountered form. Humans are naturally and culturally attracted to this form of water, and when it occurs in larger quantities along the Parkway, humans are usually present. Certainly waterfalls and cascading streams are perceived in the human mind as beauty. In its somewhat rarer form, water as ice, snow, frost, or rime produces visual changes in the landscape that are not only attractive to humans but are utilized differently. Skiers who now seek out remote portions of the Parkway will attest to this. The second physical element, rock, is more prominent on the Parkway where

it has been exposed, in many cases by construction of the highway, than it is in the valleys surrounding the Parkway. Except for the hue changes, darkening, and weathering with age, rocks generally exhibit no visible changes with seasonal or daily patterns.

Thus we come to the most prominent feature of the landscape, the vegetation. Vegetation changes with season, life form, life stage, and in combination with changes in the physical elements, especially water. Let us take a closer look at this change, perhaps elucidating what has been in our subconscious, and perhaps opening up avenues for better appreciation of the Parkway in our future visits.

## Plants in Winter

Without really thinking about it, one usually perceives winter as a time when plants are a dull gray, dormant, and uninteresting. If one were to take another view, that there might still be something taking place in the vast forest, though more slowly in the cold temperatures, one might find vegetation in winter to be less dull. Most of us know that plants are the food source for wild animals, especially those who cannot hibernate and must continue to forage for food in winter. Not all birds, for example, hibernate nor fly to Florida for the winter. Birds perceive red colors and if one looks, red berried plants are scattered throughout the Appalachians. Besides the more familiar red-berried American holly, the close cousins of the deciduous hollies, commonly called winterberries, frequent both ridges (*Ilex ambigua* var. *montana*) and swamps or streambanks (*I. verticillata*). What a delight to the senses to walk up a ridge and see heavily laden branches of these scarlet fruits framed against the blue winter with cottony white clouds passing above!

Not only the fruit of plants are of interest in the winter landscape, but as almost anyone who has travelled the Parkway can attest, there are beautiful patches of green moss that cover the rocks and some tree trunks in nearly any season (figure 1). Some of the mosses begin their life in late winter when the eggs in the female plants mature and await the splash of a raindrop on the moss "flowers" to carry their sperms through the air to the awaiting female plants. It is usually in late February that the young sporophyte plants begin their life while still attached to the female plants and rise with their shaggy caps to expose their brown stems. When driving along the Parkway, it is quite noticeable that some mosses have changed from their usual green to the white and brown hues belied by the spore-producing offspring.

There are other events that the careful observer will notice along the Parkway in winter. Among them are changes in some of the more hardy winter plants, such as rhododendrons. Rosebay rhododendron, the most common on the Parkway from low to high elevations, will begin to roll its leaves as the temperature drops below freezing. It seems that the colder it gets, the tighter the rhododendron's leaf is rolled, but apparently no one



**Fig. 1** Appalachian Oak "Orchard." Common in the high mountain elevations, stunted growth is typical of northern red oaks (*Quercus rubra* var. *borealis*). In the cloud mists that frequent the mountain peaks and gaps, lush growths of mosses (darker patches on the tree trunks) and lichens (lighter patches) add variety to the winter scene. Photograph by Gilbert Leebrick © 1985, Appalachian Environmental Center.

has studied this. Mountain laurel (called "ivy" by local people while the rhododendrons are called "laurel"), on the other hand, remain flat-leaved but becomes more "glassy" as the cells freeze. If the higher elevations are accessible and these plants do not warm up before clouds surround them, another remarkable change occurs. The clouds begin to freeze to the cold surfaces as the super-cooled droplets make contact. The result is rime or "hoar frost." For all those that have been delighted to see this, the imagination is the only limitation for delight in this phenomenon.

Winter is the time when another remarkable phenomenon occurs in the northern portion of the Parkway. Frequently in the low meadows and swamps of this region, suitable habitats for the skunk cabbage occur. This unusual species of the arum family has evolved a mechanism that enables it to flower even before the snow has melted or the soil has thawed. It generates enough heat in its growing bud to melt its way up from the roots as its flowering spathe emerges through the mud. Temperatures measured inside these spathes indicate several degrees difference between the inside temperature and the air temperature.. Skunk cabbage also generates a fetid odor, attractive to flies which also emerge from their watery overwintering habitats. These flies find the warmth and bits of food provided by the skunk cabbage flowers attractive while they unwittingly go about the task of assisting in cross pollination of the small flowers within the spathe. By the time the spring peepers have gotten their chorus together, the young seeds of the skunk cabbage are well developed.

## **The Season of Swelling Buds**

While the spring peepers herald the coming of spring for the listeners, the swelling of the red maple flower buds and the drooping of the alder "tags" are the first signs of spring for the eyes. Although only the size of buckshot, thousands of red maple buds viewed up a mountain slope or through the flats of swamps will give a definite red tint to the forests. The same effect is produced by the hundreds of alder tags that yield clouds of yellow pollen to the warm breezes as they drift along the creek banks.

It's very soon after the red maples have burst forth with their yellow pollen (giving an orange tint to the spring pastels of the landscape) or bright red stigmas soon to enlarge with red-winged young fruits, that the pure white of the serviceberry or "sarvis" blooms. This plant may be even better as a barometer for spring: it is very visible and starting in March at the lower elevations it progresses onward into May at the highest elevations of the Parkway in the Balsams.

Since most of the forests of the southern Appalachians are deciduous, the sun rises as winter wanes and brings greater warmth to the forest floor. This, combined with the increasing day length, is all that is needed to encourage the buds of bulbs, rhizomes, and corms of the forest perennials or

seeds of the annuals to burst forth with the challenge of spring. These spring herbs waste no precious moments; some complete their growth, flowering, pollination, and fruit set within two to four weeks. This means that the forest floors become a riot of colors between March and early May as the forest canopy begins to emerge.

Among the first herbs to bloom are the spring beauties and trout lilies. Both these species have developed resource conserving mechanisms, opening their petals to expose their nectar, pollen, and stigmas only in the warmth of sunlight. Spring beauties are delicately pink, pen-striped on their petals, guiding the foraging insects to the bright yellow spots near the petal base where nectar awaits the obliging pollinator. Bees attracted to the turned-up yellow petals will likewise be rewarded as they scramble on the hanging anthers and stigma when the nectaries are approached from below.

It is not long after these earliest blooming beauties that the showy lilies really put forth the Appalachian spring. Perhaps nowhere else in the world is the show of trilliums better than in the Appalachians. At least six species of trilliums occur here, often in a mass of colorful blooms. Some have three variegated leaves with the flower sitting low in the center and are either maroon (*Trillium cuneatum*) or yellow (*T. cuneatum* var. *luteum*). Others have green leaves with the flowers slung on stalks below (*T. cernuum*, *T. grandiflorum*, *T. catesbaei*, *T. undulatum*, or *T. erectum* var. *vaseyi*). These vary from white (*T. grandiflorum*), to white with red stripe (*T. undulatum*), to pink (*T. cernuum*, *T. catesbaei*), to deep maroon (*T. erectum* var. *vaseyi*). It is impressive to walk below a colony of the latter one with its deep fleshy tones and three-parted pattern. One realizes that any good fly could not pass up the opportunity to stop and do its thing.

Out along the roadway or in the meadows flanking the Parkway, other species are making their impressions on the passersby. Weedy species often find the shoulder of the roadway suitable habitat to carry on their life cycles. Besides the yellows of dandelions, golden ragworts, or cat's-ear, there are patches of blue that, when viewed from a distance are called "split milk," but up close are more commonly called bluets or "Quaker ladies standing by the garden gate."

There are not many showy early blooming shrubs, but one has not appreciated what is provided on the Parkway unless pinkshell azaleas (*rhododendron vaseyi*) have been seen. Except for portions of northwestern North Carolina, the more extensive populations of this species occur in the Balsams in Jackson County. Starting in the vicinity of the Graveyard Fields, the charming pink to almost white flowers emblazon the road shoulders, cliffs, and woods openings of this area. It is only the first two weeks of May that the pinkshell azalea can be seen; thus, it is only a brief time that this rarity of the plant world can be seen and cherished.

And not to be outdone, a first cousin, the flame azalea (*R. calendulaceum*) is already making its debut at lower elevations. William Bartram was quite

impressed by this most flamboyant of American shrubs, with its flame colors ranging from yellow to almost red. Because of its wider altitudinal distribution, flame azaleas can be enjoyed from late April until early July at various places along the Parkway.

Perhaps more celebrated in this family of plants is the late spring blooming of the evergreen rhododendrons, especially the purple rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*). This species made the Craggy Gardens famous, as visitors began to come to see the Garden's displays long before the Parkway was established. More recently, as the bushes have aged and as a succession of other plants have moved into the heath balds occupied by the purple rhododendron, the floral displays have diminished somewhat. But these plants can be enjoyed at other stations along the Parkway, because many were planted earlier in the landscaping projects. Secondly, there are displays of another species, sometimes called the Carolina rhododendron (*R. minus*). This one has smaller leaves and the flower clusters vary from white to pink or even to lavender. The visitor need only keep a lookout for these between May and early June for enhanced appreciation.

By the time most forest floor spring plants have formed their fruits, the trees above have leafed out, bloomed, and have begun the long process of setting their fruits. While leafing out by the willows might be underway in February at the lowest elevations near the James River, it won't be complete until mid May at the highest elevations in the Balsams. Thus it is June before it seems to be summer throughout the Parkway.

## The Green Season

Summer is the time for growth, filling of fruit, and storage for the upcoming dormant seasons for the plant world of the Appalachians. Green leaves, spread out to capture the energy of the sun, comprise the predominant feature of nearly all Appalachian plants. A few species have their sequence reversed, blooming and setting fruit later in the season. It is these late bloomers that now become more attractive to the Parkway visitor.

Early summer can be colorful where the more weedy types of wildflowers occur. At lower elevations, the oxeye daisy is one of the more common meadow and border plants. Its combination of yellow center and circle of white ray flowers are well known to young lovers as they romantically pluck each ray alternating the saying, "he (or she) loves me and loves me not." It isn't very long after daisy blooms that the butterfly or chigger weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) is blooming forth in orange or yellows. At about this same time, both the lacy white wild carrot (the same species as our cultivated carrot) or queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*) and black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) with its purple-black centers and ring of yellow rays spot meadow and road bank alike.

If variety and color are to be enjoyed most, it is the higher elevations

of the Blacks, Craggies, Balsams, or Smokies that should be sought. Just as the flame azaleas begin to fade, a rainbow of color awaits the unfurling of the sepals in the yellow sundrops (*Oenothera tetragona*), orange turk's cap lily (*Lilium superbum*), red-orange to red Canada lily (*L. canadense*), scarlet fire pink (*Silene virginica*) and oswego tea (*Monarda didyma*), dark pink wild phlox (*Phlox carolina*), lavender wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), or blue chickory (*Cichorium intybus*), or tall bellflower (*Campanula americana*). These plants are not only brilliant in color but typically are seen along the Parkway in large masses, unmistakably grouped to more effectively attractive pollinators.

Not only do the higher elevations have masses of blooming plants, here some plants commonly associated with spring, such as fire pink, or goldenrods, more typical of autumn, bloom about the same time. On the other hand, leaves of trees begin to change colors just as the spring flowers finish blooming. Thus while spring arrives later at the upper elevations, autumn arrives sooner.

## The Season of Resplendence

In September in the high elevations, nights become a bit cooler while days may bask in brilliant sun as the hazy days of summer begin to evaporate. These conditions often bring on the change in the leaf that reveals the other colors masked by the green chlorophyll. Usually sourwood, dogwood, red maple, etc. are the first to reveal their red colors. Birches, mountain maples, sugar maples, and the like begin to show their yellows as chlorophyll is bleached by the sun. Goldenrods hurry their seed maturing processes while blue gentians and ague weed (*Gentiana clausa*, *G. guinguefolia*) fruit pods swell within their retained, colorful blue corollas.

Like a yellow shade being dropped in a sunlit room, the mellow yellow colors descend slowly at first, and more quickly with the first hint of light frost, until by mid October the entire valley floors have been transformed into the final brilliance of autumn. Tulip trees or yellow poplars are one of the earlier trees to show yellow colors in the valley coves. Red maples and sourwood spot the entire area with red. Mockernut hickories and rich golden yellows and finally scarlet oaks express the feature for which they are named. Given all this and the cool, clear air masses that often clothe the Appalachians, autumn can be almost electrifying to the eyes. Shortly after a warm rain or a brisk wind, the brilliance departs almost as quickly as it seems to have appeared, and the quietness of winter is felt in the morning calm. Even until Thanksgiving some of the oak leaves will linger, but the rush on the Parkway has passed and the finally quiet roadway awaits the first soft hush of the snow.

# Agriculture in the Blue Ridge Parkway

by  
*William O. Hooper*

It is unusual, of course, but the Blue Ridge Parkway is really an elongated park consisting of a corridor or strip of land averaging about 800 feet in width, but often wider, with a motor road superimposed upon the meandering right-of-way extending through National Forests, densely populated neighborhoods, open farm lands, narrow valleys, and over precipitous ridges from Rockfish Gap near Waynesboro, Virginia, to the edge of The Great Smoky Mountain National Park near Cherokee, North Carolina. In addition to the hundreds of small parcels of land acquired by the states of North Carolina and Virginia to form the basic 470-mile stretch of right-of-way, the United States of America, by means of purchase and donations, acquired a collection of tracts to establish expansive park units such as Peaks of Otter Park, Smart View Park, Rocky Knob Park, Cumberland Knob Park, Doughton Park, Julian Price Park, and Moses H. Cone Park, each to be managed by the National Park Service according to its intrinsic qualities so that each park unit will exhibit some of the traditional images of mountain culture. Perish the thought, but it would be a very dull and rapid travel experience to drive through the Blue Ridge Mountains along the magnificent elevations of the Parkway motor road if there were no open fields along the way to provide panorama and picture and to expose the life styles, both past and present, of Parkway neighbors.

In its route through mountain farm communities, the Blue Ridge Parkway opened great picture windows to expose a way of life hitherto heavily veiled from the eyes of the American tourist. It was an interesting pattern of self-sufficiency and ingenious make-do unmatched by any people of that time in history. Still in silent operation were the scythe and the cradle along with the muffled sounds of homemade grist mills powered by racing mountain streams. Still in picturesque array were the pole-centered haystacks ringed by a split rail fence until the hay was scattered around the meadow to force the feeding cattle to disseminate their manure droppings to fertilize the next hay crop. Still in delightful symmetry were the great shocks of corn neatly embellished with bright, yellow pumpkins encircling the stack. Occasional teams of oxen were still working their way slowly across the cultivated slopes amid the prevalence of horse-drawn equipment. And buckwheat was still a "catch crop" that supplied nectar for the honeybee, feed for the livestock, and a most delicate flavor for one of the tastiest hotcakes ever served to a visitor.

A Yankee city slicker, Stanley W. Abbott, and his right hand power broker from Kansas, Edward H. Abbuehl, recognized the singular beauty of moun-

tain agriculture and moved with alacrity and authority to set the stage in a master plan for its perpetuation in the Parkway.

In formulating plans for the development and maintenance of the Parkway corridor, the landscape architects often indicated certain management details for open fields to be set aside for agricultural use. Split rails, for instance, were given preference for exposed fence lines carefully located to take advantage of such niceties as harmony and style. Crop rotation might be practiced in suitable locations while hay fields, pastures, and orchards were preferred in other locations. Using artistic skills with inspiration and vision, the landscape architects drew their plans for croplands and pastures with the same good judgment that they used to select some open fields for regeneration to woodland. Without the cultivated croplands and pasture fields, the Blue Ridge Parkway would soon become just a 470-mile strip of woodland with an occasional break for an open vista to be maintained at tremendous expense with axe and saw. Lost to the visitor would be the warm exposure of a graceful mountain culture with some of the world's most enchanting scenery. It was the Blue Ridge Parkway visionary who pioneered and developed management outlines for preserving orchards and crops and pasture for the benefit of the millions who visit the Parkway each year.

To manage a few thousand acres of land in one big tract is quite different from managing nearly five thousand acres composed of small parcels scattered over a distance of 325 miles amid elevations often ranging from less than one thousand feet to more than four thousand feet. Yes, the Parkway contains nearly five thousand acres of open land to be leased to Parkway neighbors. The diversity of these parcels of land required study and analysis to determine use-capability based on slope, soil type, and erosion losses. Moreover, there were no guidelines to help the professional pioneers with their mission to devise workable programs for the maintenance of farm land in government ownership. But if it were left to the Park Service to maintain all this open land with mowing machines and men, it is obvious that the cost would overwhelm the park budget. So, there was a serious demand for skilled management to enlist the adjoining property owners in a scientific land use program on Parkway and adjacent lands in order to conserve soil and moisture, eliminate the insidious erosion problems, and maintain the open fields which provide the distant vistas. Parkway management met the challenge by employing an agronomist to set in motion a novel program involving adjoining landowners who would agree to use Parkway lands in accord with scientific information available at the time. This land management program began with a few hundred acres just before the second World War interrupted Parkway construction for the duration of the conflict.

Daniel Levandowsky, a Russian emigrant, was the first agronomist in charge of agricultural use of Parkway lands. Levandowsky's antipathy for waste led him into time-consuming projects to convert hardwood leaves, sawdust, and other salvageable materials into plant nutrients or soil

conditioners which were ideal for small garden plots, but too limited and too expensive for practical application in general agriculture. He clearly recognized the evils of too much cultivation as the cause of inordinate losses of soil and moisture and, to provide an alternative, he began to introduce new hill culture practices in the highlands of Virginia and North Carolina. The widespread need for soil and moisture conservation led Levandowsky to seek and obtain the assistance of the Soil Conservation Service in establishing work units in counties along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Demonstration projects were very helpful in educating and encouraging the farmers associating themselves with the Parkway program. As farmers learned new techniques in the use of Parkway lands they applied their knowledge to the benefit of their own operations and, often enough, to adjoining neighborhoods.

It will be increasingly difficult for anyone to visualize or imagine the scene along the Parkway in those years of the Great Depression when large farm families and their livestock were supported by intense cultivation of row crops accompanied by overuse of unfertilized pastures. Altogether common were the housewife and children, each with hoe in hand, working slowly across the hillside in an assault on weeds and grasses while the head of the family used a horse-drawn plow to cultivate the soil between the corn rows. Aside from cash crops, such as cabbage and potatoes, almost every mountain farmer relied upon a large crop of corn for grain and fodder. Fodder, consisting of the leaves on the cornstalk, often supplied most of the roughage in the feed of farm animals while the grain was reserved for attending livestock destined for the table or the market. Corn was king. Corn supplied bread for the table and, often enough, was a primary source of income in the form of "white lightening" or "moonshine." Cash was so hard to come by in the dark days of the depression that some mountain men were willing to risk "gittin' caught" for the monetary rewards of manufacturing illicit whiskey. Whether it was used for corn bread or corn liquor, too much of this crop was grown on slopes that should have been covered in grass or trees. Gullies and rills and exposed subsoil followed too much cultivation so that erosion was widespread and unrestrained. Erosion was a showy, destructive force that removed topsoil from the slopes and clogged the streams all over the agricultural areas of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

At the close of the second World War, Stanley W. Abbott elected to return to the Blue Ridge Parkway as Resident Landscape Architect while Sam P. Weems was promoted from Acting Superintendent to Superintendent. So, it was Superintendent Weems who then moved courageously and forcefully to correct the accelerated losses of soil and moisture within Parkway boundaries. When there was a mild suggestion that erosion might be nothing more than another element of natural forces, it was Superintendent Weems who declared that erosion — by whatever name it might be called — was most unwelcome in the Blue Ridge Parkway. He already had strong support

and assistance from Otis B. Taylor, a brilliant workaholic, who had been selected to develop a soil and moisture conservation program for National Park units east of the Mississippi River. This was the situation when William O. Hooper left the Soil Conservation Service to become Blue Ridge Parkway agronomist just after Germany surrendered in 1945.

In the years that followed the second World War, there were two distinct but closely related programs of land management on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The parcels of land set aside for agricultural use were assigned by special use permit — a kind of lease — to farmers who paid a fee to use the land according to specifications supplied by the Parkway agronomist. In the steepest fields where bad farming practices had taken an insidious toll before the land was acquired for the Parkway right-of-way, Mr. Taylor's soil and moisture conservation program was implemented under the supervision of the Parkway agronomist. Most of this land had to be stabilized and planted to trees. The stabilization program and the leasing program were expanded to some extent in order to include the lands immediately adjoining the Parkway where the private landowner shared in an operation that would blend private land with parkway property to eliminate the intrusion of a marked property line. In extending the conservation of soil and moisture from Parkway to adjoining lands, the essential element was cooperation. Local landowners supplied equipment and labor and most materials while the Park Service supplied technical assistance, some of the materials, and lot of push and shove encouragement. This entailed numerous meetings and discussions to promote understanding and harmony.

Along with the early efforts to develop land management programs to include all those parcels of open land in the Blue Ridge Parkway, there was a muted but visible element which required the personal touch and imagination of the Parkway agronomist; namely, a modest exhibition of historic crops such as buckwheat and linen flax along with picturesque haystacks and permanent meadows and the typical types of split rail fences. But, just as surely as machines have gradually displaced horses and oxen, those machines have also eliminated towering haystacks, and colorful shocks of corn ringed with yellow pumpkins, the enchanting fields of buckwheat, and the interesting plots of linen flax. Like the mountain farmer, the National Park Service became more mechanized by standards and guidelines that supplant imagination and individuality among its personnel. This has eliminated the Parkway agronomist and many creative functions of other professionals so that management is largely reduced to routines described in regulations and handbooks.

Handbook management cannot match the quality or the effectiveness of professional creativity — the kind of creativity that is required to arrange for fields of buckwheat that attract the honeybee and the camera bug. And, without the professional managers, who will arrange contour strip cropping to provide beautiful patterns of crop rotation for the protection of the earth's thin layer of topsoil? Who will arrange to catch the eye of the Parkway

visitor with shocks of corn and piles of pumpkins? Will a few seasonal employees, dressed in artificial attire, put on an expensive mimicry of pioneer life while the genuine elements of self-sufficient mountain culture disappear forever from the Blue Ridge Parkway?

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# Benefits Sought by Blue Ridge Parkway Tourists

by  
Mark Bonn

Since 1939, the Blue Ridge Parkway has served as a major tourist destination area. Data from the U.S. National Park Service indicates that when compared with other national parks, the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) is a national leader. It ranks as the 13th largest national park by acreage (82,000 acres) as well as the 17th most popular NPSA area with overnight stays (254.611). Perhaps most significant is that the BRP leads all national parks in terms of recreational visits with 19.2 million tourists reported during 1984. This represents an increase of 7.5 million tourists per year since 1979.

Because of this phenomenal growth, it was deemed necessary to explore one of the most important market segments of the BRP: the recreational tourist. Although varied studies have addressed recreational issues at other national parks, limited data exists with respect to BRP tourists and their behavior.

Tourists using the BRP as a recreational area were interviewed during the summer of 1985. Specifically, tourists were interviewed around Boone—Blowing Rock—Linville, North Carolina, commonly referred to as the North Carolina "High Country."

On-site information was collected and analyzed pertaining to benefits or motives sought by those tourists for using the BRP as a linear park. Additional information was obtained with reference to use patterns, origin, distance traveled, length of stay, economic expenditures, and level of satisfaction with the overall experience. This pilot study was intended to gather base-line data in order to develop user profiles so that managers and tourism related enterprises would better understand the wants and needs of those BRP tourists in the Boone—Blowing Rock—Linville, North Carolina area.

In order to meet the objectives of this study, a survey interview instrument was developed. Information relative to the study was determined utilizing several methods. Research needs were first identified through conversations with M. Harris Prevost, President of the Blue Ridge Parkway Association during March-May, 1983. In addition, telephone conversations with Mr. Gary Everhardt, Superintendent of the BRP during this same time period enabled the researcher to establish a set of priority variables deemed essential by the current BRP management.

In order to make future comparisons with BRP tourists and the general population of tourists visiting North Carolina, questions were incorporated from the 1984 North Carolina Travel Survey pertaining to travel behavior,

demographics, psychographics, and activities preferences. In all, over 500 usable responses were obtained for analysis.

It has been recognized that benefit analysis is a useful marketing tool in the development of policy and new product/services design. The BRP, utilized heavily in the past as a source of information collection and program implementation that often serves as a model for other national parks, was selected for this market research to better understand the importance of benefits sought by BRP tourists. This study was concerned with identifying people with pleasure travel needs, who had money to spend, and a willingness to spend it.

Recent tourism studies have attempted to determine satisfaction with a resource or destination by segmenting tourists according to motives, desired outcomes, or psychological benefits sought. One study successfully segmented tourists who engage in float trips in Big Bend N.P. by using benefits sought. Ten distinct underlying socio-psychological motives or benefits resulted from this analysis (Graefe, 1977).

Another study attempted to determine tourist satisfaction at a national military park by implementing benefit segmentation of tourists (Knopf and Barnes, 1980). The data demonstrated the potential role that visitor support staffs can have in influencing user experiences. Also, the benefit segmentation analysis showed the importance that orientation information, and the dominant role of desired psychological outcomes had upon visitor satisfaction. Benefit scale items were constructed using 25 statements that were identified as important pleasure vacation benefits by previous studies (Crompton, 1977; Gray, 1981; Bonn, 1982; Bonn, 1984). A reliability coefficient of 0.764 was attained for the 25 benefit items, which was deemed acceptable for the purpose of this study.

Factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to identify underlying dimensions, or market segments of the overall BRP tourist. The analysis of the 25 benefit items suggests four underlying dimensions, or benefit scales which accounted for 80 percent of the variance explained. In constructing the benefit scales, most of the variables loaded heavily on at least three factors. Factor loadings in the 0.65 to 0.75 range were considered strong evidence for placement of a variable. The final determination of scale content was based upon mathematical, theoretical and heuristic criterion.

The four markets identified through benefit segmentation analysis are identified in Table 1. The four distinct tourist segments were named "Scenery", "Escape-Relax", "Education/Adventure", and "Family-Social". Due to the fact that a large percent of individuals interviewed were with party sizes of two or more, it was surprising to see the segment "family-social" account for only 0.07 percent of the variance explained. Table 2 further describes group size of responding tourists.

With respect to tourist origin, an overwhelming majority of responding tourists indicated they were from North Carolina, Tennessee, South

**TABLE 1**  
**MARKET SEGMENTS OF BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY TOURISTS**  
**UTILIZING BENEFIT SEGMENTATION**

<b>Market Segment 1 (Scenery)</b>		<b>Market Segment 2 (Escape-Relax)</b>	
Proportion of variance explained = 51%		Proportion of variance explained = 12%	
Variable	Factor Loading	Variable	Factor Loading
Scenery	.899	Unwind	.790
Beauty	.801	Get Away	.782
Wilderness	.705	Rest & Relax	.741
Environment	.701	Escape	.610
<b>Market Segment 3 (Education/Adventure)</b>		<b>Market Segment 4 (Family/Social)</b>	
Proportion of variance explained = 10%		Proportion of variance explained = 7%	
Variable	Factor Loading	Variable	Factor Loading
See New Things	.780	Enrich Family Relations	.881
Learn About Areas	.777	Spend time with Family	.825
Explore New Places	.771	Reduce Friction with Family	.790
Learn About History	.651	Develop Comradery	.741
		Interact with Locals	.601
		Meet New People	.595

Carolina, Virginia, and Florida accounted for nearly all of the remaining respondents. Small percentages of tourists, however, indicated trip origin of distances over 500 miles (See Table 3).

**TABLE 2**  
**GROUP SIZE OF TOURISTS VISITING THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY DURING SUMMER, 1985**

Group Size	Percent of Sample
1	4.2
2	24.8
3	14.6
4	19.5
5 or more	36.9
TOTAL.....	100.0

**TABLE 3**  
**ORIGIN OF BRP TOURISTS VISITING THE N.C. HIGH COUNTRY**

State	Percent of Sample
N.C.	52.00%
Tennessee	14.65%
S.C.	11.19%
Virginia	10.01%
Florida	7.22%
Others	4.93%
TOTAL.....	100.00%

Economic impact to local economies by tourists visiting the BRP was an area of interest previously expressed by Parkway management. The total direct expenditures presented here do not fully represent the impact upon the local communities by those surveyed tourists, but rather serve as a parameter for future studies. Due to the multiplier effect, or the number of times a dollar may actually turn over in a given community, the magnitude of economic impact is extremely difficult to assess. However, when asked to approximate how much BRP traveling parties spent in the North Carolina High Country area, over 50 percent indicated expenditures of less than \$10 (See Table 4).

TABLE 4  
BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY TOURIST EXPENDITURES BY PARTY  
IN THE NORTH CAROLINA HIGH COUNTRY

Amount	Percent of Sample
\$ 0	24.06%
Less than \$10	60.75%
\$10 to \$50	6.55%
\$51 to \$100	2.10%
\$100 or more	1.33%
No Response	5.21%
Total . . . . .	100.00

When asked to identify what recreational activities tourists engaged in while using the BRP, nearly half of the respondents indicated driving for pleasure as the major pursuit. Hiking, shopping for supplies, visiting scenic areas, visiting historic sites, camping and picnicing were the most popular recreational activities identified by those responding tourists (See Table 5).

TABLE 5  
BRP TOURISTS AND THEIR RECREATIONAL PURSUITS WHILE  
VISITING THE NORTH CAROLINA HIGH COUNTRY DURING SUMMER, 1985

Activity	Percent of Sample
Driving for Pleasure	46.24%
Hiking	41.05%
Shopping for Supplies	36.51%
Visiting Scenic Areas	33.79%
Visiting Historic Sites	27.64%
Camping	10.87%
Picnicing	10.30%
Other	52.66%

\*Totals do not add to 100 percent due to multiple responses.

Tourists were asked to indicate the length of time spent on the BRP. Over 55 percent of those respondents indicated they spent less than one day traveling the BRP. However, over 30 percent indicated use exceeding one day (See Table 6).

TABLE 6  
LENGTH OF STAY BY BRP TOURISTS  
DURING SUMMER 1985

Length of Stay	Percent of Respondents
Less than 1 Day	56.34
1 Day	12.72
2 Days	7.51
3 Days	5.92
4 Days	3.10
5 or More Days	2.46
Non-respondents	11.95
TOTAL.....	100.00

The final part of the survey examined overall satisfaction with the BRP experience. Respondents were asked to evaluate five satisfaction items on scales ranging from 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest attainable level of satisfaction. Results are described in Table 7.

TABLE 7  
LEVEL OF BRP TOURIST SATISFACTION WITH SELECTED VARIABLES

Satisfaction Variable	Average Level of Satisfaction
Overall Impression	8.8
Cleanliness	8.1
Crowdedness	6.2
Safety/Security	8.3
Availability of Goods/Supplies	7.7

In conclusion, this study sought to identify and develop baseline data in an attempt to define market segments of the BRP tourist. Utilizing a limited budget, sampling frame and an abbreviated survey instrument, over 500 tourists were analyzed. Five distinct tourist markets were identified. Overall impressions of the BRP as a recreational tourist destination were very favorable. It is recommended that in-depth tourism marketing studies be coordinated with local BRP communities to determine specific regional market segment fluctuations as well as economic impact information. Indeed, this study supports that the BRP is a consistent "agent in transition" for tourists.

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# National Concessioner Policy in Transition: An Example from the Blue Ridge Parkway

by  
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Change is inevitable. This is true for all individuals, organizations and government entities. Whether change is fostered by social influences, political pressures or environmental factors, a strong base of information can provide direction for necessary policy or operational adjustments. A large part of the necessary information can come only from sites where these adjustments are initially tried.

The Blue Ridge Parkway has played a major role as a base for conducting research, in addition to the myriad of other functions it must perform. The research role of the Parkway makes it not only an "Agent in Transition" but an innovator in shaping the form and conduct of NPS policy on a nationwide level.

One of the most recent examples of the Parkway's leadership in shaping NPS policy concerns the private sector provision of goods and services traditionally provided by the public sector. Specifically, the Parkway's use of a private concessioner to operate one of the campgrounds along the Parkway is part of the current administration's philosophy toward government and the economy. The administration has hoped to stimulate economic growth by reducing the presence and involvement of government. Outdoor recreation management, like other public land practices, has been influenced by these policies. The administration has urged the private sector to take an increased role in providing recreation facilities and services. Former Interior Secretary, James G. Watt stated that concessioners "...are going to play a tremendously important and growing role" in providing recreation facilities and services on public lands (Frome, 1981 :16). A number of public agencies manage land for outdoor recreation. For many of these agencies, private concessioners provide some recreation related facilities and/or services. Among these agencies is the National Park Service.

## **NPS Concessioner Operated Campgrounds:**

In 1983 the National Park Service initiated a two-year pilot program to determine the feasibility and benefits of having private sector concessioners operate Service campgrounds. The objective in having concessioners operate select National Park Service campgrounds was to permit park management

to reduce a part of its housekeeping and maintenance burden and to apply the resources thus saved to the continuance of restoration of other essential functions. Properly handled, the program was expected not to reduce face-to-face visitor contact, but rather to enhance the quality and quantity of contact through park programs. The two-year pilot program was completed at the end of the 1984 camping session.

The program was initially approved by the Director of the National Park Service and the Regional Directors were informed by letter on 1 April 1983:

...“I have approved a pilot program of concessioner operated campgrounds at Blue Ridge Parkway, Crater Lake, Lassen Volcanic and Big Bend National Parks and Lake Mead National Recreation Area. ...The way in which the public perceives concessioner operation of campgrounds is vital not only to this program but, even more, to continued support of all National Park Service endeavors. This is not a give away but rather it is a hard headed business decision on the part of the government which lets us concentrate available people and dollars on those functions which are critical to the operation of the parks. ...Please proceed early to negotiate final agreements with your concessioner and keep this office apprised of your progress” (Dickenson, 1983).

Based on this letter the administration of the Blue Ridge Parkway entered into an agreement with a private concessioner to “...operate and maintain a National Park Service campground for the public on the Blue Ridge Parkway...”

Site and visitor protection were among the necessary criteria recognized by the Blue Ridge Personnel for selecting which campground could be managed by a concessioner. The criteria for site selection included such items as:

1. Assuring the site was not included in a bear management area.
2. Selecting a site that would not require involved management actions regarding hazardous wildlife; unique or endangered flora or fauna; sensitive resource issues; site restoration or recovery programs; pest management programs or similar difficult situations.
3. Assuring the necessary facilities existed to limit possessory interest by the concessioner during pilot program.
4. Selecting a concessioner able to demonstrate the ability to perform or execute:
  - a) maintenance
  - b) repair
  - c) record keeping
  - d) initial firefighting duties
  - e) resource management
  - f) personnel management
  - g) required reports to the Service

h) litter pick-up

5. Selecting an operator with an understanding of NPS policies and procedures and the ability to communicate effectively to the public regarding the two-year pilot program.

Once all the necessary safeguards were in place the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Clemson Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management and the Clemson Cooperative Park Study Unit undertook an evaluation of visitor reaction to the concessioner operated campground. Either on-site or mail contracts were made with over 1,600 campground visitors during 1983 and 1984. They were asked to evaluate their satisfaction of the campground under concessioner operation, and also to compare the operation of this campground with other NPS operated sites.

## Results:

All visitors contacted were asked if they had stayed at the concession-operated campground or other NPS campgrounds prior to 1983. Interviewed visitors to two other NPS operated campgrounds were also asked if they had stayed at that campground before. If they had, they were asked to compare the current management with these previous visits or visits to other sites. These responses are presented in Table 1.

All 1983 and 1984 visitors to the concession-operated campground (1214 visitors) were asked to respond to four items concerning: the enforcement of rules and regulations; adequacy of patrols; facility cleanliness and upkeep; and, impression of employees. Yes or no responses were requested. These responses are given in Table 2.

TABLE 1  
COMPARISON OF CURRENT AND PREVIOUS CAMPGROUND MANAGEMENT

Item	Concession Campground		Other NPS Sites	
	number	percent	number	percent
Total Visitors	18,689	100%	---	---
Total Response	1,957	10%	400	---
Visitors who had stayed at campground prior to 1983.	768	39%	174	45%
Management was:				
better	185	25%	25	14%
same	481	64%	143	82%
worse	86	11%	6	4%
Visitors who had stayed at other NPS campgrounds.	1,492	76%	381	95%
Management was:				
better	513	35%	246	65%
same	831	57%	122	32%
worse	107	7%	13	3%

**TABLE 2**  
 VISITOR REACTION TO THE ADEQUACY OF SELECT ITEMS  
 AT CONCESSION CAMPGROUND

Item	Number of		Percent yes
	yes	no	
Rules and regulations adequately enforced?	1054	88	92%
Adequately patrolled for safety?	1011	70	94%
Facilities clean and well kept?	1098	82	93%
Employees pleasant, knowledgeable and helpful?	1110	60	95%

Visitors were asked to express their satisfaction with 17 items at the campgrounds. A total of 603 visitors to the concession campground and 403 visitors to other NPS operated sites responded to the satisfaction scale. The scales record visitor impressions from 2 to 10, with higher numbers indicating more satisfaction. Results are displayed in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**  
 MEAN VISITOR REACTION TO SELECT ITEMS AT CAMPGROUNDS  
 (2=poor; 10=excellent)\*

Satisfaction Items	Concessioner Campground	Other NPS Sites
First Impression	8.5	8.6
Cleanliness of Campsites	8.7	8.8
Cleanliness of Other Facilities	8.3	8.2
Upkeep of Campground	8.4	8.7
Control of Pets	8.8	8.5
Privacy of Campsites	8.0	7.7
Campground Attractiveness	8.5	8.7
Availability of Supplies	7.7	7.1
Recreation Opportunities	8.0	8.5
Ease of Check In	8.5	8.7
Safety & Security	8.2	8.6
Good Rules/Regulations	8.2	8.5
Enforcement of Rules/Regulations	8.5	8.6
Employees Helpfulness	8.6	8.9
Employees Knowledge	8.5	8.9
Employees Attitude	8.7	9.1
Recommendation to Friends Concerning Campground	8.6	8.8

\*Scale: 2-poor; 4-below average; 6-average; 8-above average; 10-excellent.

Campers were asked to complete a "Delighted/Terrible" rating scale. The

D/T scale measures consumer satisfaction. Responses are converted to a ten point scale with higher numbers indicating satisfaction with a product or service. At least a one point difference is necessary before it can be concluded real satisfaction differences exist. Visitors responses are displayed in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
CAMPERS RESPONSES TO ITEMS ON THE DELIGHTED/TERRIBLE SCALE

Camper Response	Concessioner Campground (N=600)		Other NPS Sites (N=409)	
	190	32%	157	38%
Delighted	270	45%	189	46%
Most Satisfied	98	16%	50	12%
Mixed	36	6%	6	1%
Mostly Dissatisfied	1	►1%	1	►1%
Unhappy	3	►1%	—	—
Terrible	2	►1%	—	—
On a scale of 1-10 the mean for this area was:	8.6		8.9	

TABLE 5  
SUMMARY OF VISITOR COMMENTS  
(those made by at least 10% of the visitors)

	Number of Times Mentioned		
	1983	1984	Total
<b>Facility Related</b>			
Showers Desired	22	38	60
Light at Restroom Wanted	14	30	44
Desired Water at Sites	8	10	18
Good Campsites	9	7	16
Liked Primitive Atmosphere	14	1	15
Electricity Desired at Sites	7	8	15
Hot Water Desired	3	11	14
Campsites Lack Privacy	2	12	14
<b>Management Related</b>			
<b>Generally Favorable Comments:</b>			
Liked Campground/Enjoyed Visit	41	49	90
Hope to Return	17	21	38
Campground Well Maintained	13	9	21
Friendly Helpful Staff	9	9	18
Good Interpretive Programs	7	4	11
<b>Generally Negative Comments:</b>			
Negative Towards Concessioner Operations	12	16	28
Inadequate Supply of Firewood	3	22	25
Poor Reservation System	5	13	18
Inadequate/Poorly Informed Staff	11	6	17
Patrolling Inadequate	14	1	15
Noise Levels Too High	8	4	12
Restrooms Unclean or Supplies Inadequate	11	1	12
Want Better Programs or Information	3	8	11
Too Expensive	3	7	10

Visitors to the concession campground were asked to make any additional comments about their visit or about the campground. Nearly 75% of the visitors made comments. Table 5 presents a summary of the comments made: For inclusion in the table a comment had to be made by a total of at least 10 visitors.

### **Summary:**

In summary the data collected for this project indicated only minor changes be put into effect for continuation of concessioner operations. A list of camper comments was also compiled for use in future planning. Lack of complaints may well have been a result of the foresite of Parkway personnel in setting up the criteria for the pilot project. The operation of the camp-ground by a concessioner seemed to be transparent to the visitors and no problem was significant enough to jeopardize continuance of the program.

What did emerge, however, was a strong data base from which to work in setting up other similar operations. The Blue Ridge Parkway played another major role in providing information on which national policy could be formulated. The Blue Ridge Parkway went beyond being an "Agent in Transition", it played a major role in providing necessary information for intelligent decisions concerning future NPS policy.

# Notes Concerning Ruins of Motion Machinery in the Appalachian Landscape

by  
*David P. Hill*

## ABSTRACT

This paper argues that although perceived as “ugly” and “tacky,” technological ruins and sculpture in the Blue Ridge are sometimes a noble expression of a man-machine-land relationship. Some of these expressions are picturesque symbols of a sub-culture which has a “more complete view of things.” Idle machinery seen melting down into the landscape or used as sculpture inyards represents a dialogue between man and nature. Mechanical ruins are the visible language of this dialogue. The language is a quiet one, and it often goes unnoticed. This paper will deal with some of the detailed expressions of the native mountain people. It will single out and discuss the phenomenon of idle machinery in the Blue Ridge landscape, and offer observations about its present forms and functions.

## THE MACHINE IN THE BLUE RIDGE

The physical landscape of Appalachia and particularly the Blue Ridge brings a mixed bag of images into the mind of the unfamiliar visitor. Probably one of the first images most people have is the spectacular natural scenery of the region. Right on the heels of this first mental image is one of a poor and uneducated American Mountain sub-culture eking out a living on marginal lands with marginal equipment and never throwing anything away. With the success of “Beverly Hillbillies” and more recently “Dukes of Hazard,” almost every American has an idea of Mountain People and Mountain Landscape. Those who have never visited the region may believe it is a land of peculiar people with a peculiar affinity for motion machinery. No matter how corrupt the Hollywood image of Appalachia, there is evidence which supports the idea of an Appalachian sub-culture. Having close ties with marginal land through agriculture, the Appalachian has developed steep slopes and tiny plains as if he was walking on eggshells with his farming machines. The mountains were a fragile environment and there is no doubt that the use of automated machinery caused profound and irreversible changes to the soils and slopes. Mostly due to ignorance, reverence for the land evolved more slowly than reference for the machine. It is no wonder. Mechanization must have appeared as a godsend to the farmer who was barely surviv-

ing off the land during the first part of this century. The celebrated machine was unleashed into the mountain garden, creating new hope for success and a renewed opportunity for families to stay there.

At the same time the farming machines were first rumbling over the Highland Plateau, the Blue Ridge Parkway designers integrated the traveler and his automobile with the Appalachian Landscape. The parkway design provided a sublime contrast of technologies and cultures. The Blue Ridge native was living in Thomas Jefferson's "middle landscape," owning land and having close tie to the Earth by farming it as a family. Individuality and ingenuity were two of the highest virtues. Resourceful and satisfied with the status quo, the Mountain Man treated his landscape as a palette for self-expression. Natives created fields as artforms with the new miracle of mechanized horsepower.

Travelling through on the new Parkway was a different society: the mainstream of America. A technologically based breed, the mainstream desired the bigger, the better, the "new" and the "improved." When American travelers first gained access to the isolated parts of Appalachia and discovered that the natives did not share these desires, they identified the natives' mindset as "fatalistic." The Mountain People were a curiosity, satisfied with "poor" lands and low income. Their mystical treatment of the landscape was equally curious, praising it while apparently wrecking it with ruins.

Contrary to the widely held prejudice that the Appalachian is careless and even thoughtless in the disposal of "old junk machinery," the Blue Ridge farmers show a very special affection for the machine and its use on the land. The Blue Ridge Parkway's intent has been to introduce the casual visitor to the scenery and to native farming families. Over the last half century, the "ugliness" created by the native farmer and the picturesque scenery of the region has created a wicked and ever changing design problem for Parkway officials. This paper will conclude by casting light on the Parkway's role during the next fifty years as an agent of preservation—not necessarily for the preservation of idle machinery—for the preservation of the expressive Blue Ridge culture.

There is a continuous discourse between man and environment in marginal lands, and cultures in these regions usually develop a modest image of themselves in the frame of nature. There is a graceful relationship between the Appalachian Native and Landscape. The Blue Ridge People have a dialogue with the landscape, its vistas, its plants and animals. The machine has enabled people to survive in the mountains, and has symbolically become the language of this dialogue. Out of respect for machines, the ingenuity of the Mountain Man appears in form several ways. First, there are sculptural self-expressions. In these sculptures, parts of machinery are adaptively re-used as functional and aesthetic pieces. There are plow mailboxes, milk-can mailboxes and so on. Sometimes their "story" is of former land uses. Always their "story" is about the man-machine-land relationship. The

second expression is symbolic. Here, the machine is used as a monument. Machines are sited in monumental positions afforded by the Blue Ridge terrain. The symbolism of these expressions is important because it is a sign of the native farmer's close ties with the land. The third category is the study of an aesthetic accident...a very picturesque accident. As idle machines begin to melt into the land, the dialogue becomes less man-land and more machine-land.

In all instances these details by the farmer demonstrate not only his ingenuity, but his frugality and a sensitivity to the history of land use.

## 1. TECHNOLOGICAL EXPRESSIONS

Resourcefulness is one of the attributes of the Appalachian society. In the Blue Ridge, nothing is ever obsolete. America sees this resourcefulness as an indicator of two things; poverty, and more importantly, a thought process. The mainstream of American society has developed a linear thought process. In contrast, the Appalachian sub-culture developed the capacity for non-discursive thought (Wagner, 1981). This adaptation enabled mountain people to get along in the mountains, in fact it may have been a survival mechanism for life in a marginally arable land. Whatever the case, we get to see resourcefulness *exhibited* in the landscape. The trait is most visible when there is still active man-land working relationship such as farming or timbering. In this instance, the "sculpture" is the land itself. The terrain sets a perspective stage for contour plowing, crop rotation, orchards and decorative fences. Where the relationship has ceased, we can detect an obvious pathos for the past. In areas where farming or timbering has been curtailed, or technological advances have made former machines obsolete for agriculture purposes, artifacts begin to appear in the landscape to serve as markers of the past relationships.

Pieces of machinery frequently serve as monolithic sculptures in yards or at entrance roads. White tractor-tires-planted-with-flowers-scattered-about-yards seem to be a rural American phenomenon, and is very prevalent in the Blue Ridge. Tires filled with flowers and wagon wheels in flower beds offer an interesting paradox. In the past, the wheel has rolled over small plants. In these environmental artworks, they are the foundation for the plantings.

One of the most prominent examples of these artifacts are story-mailboxes. There are milk-can mailboxes, plow mailboxes, and even tractor tire mailboxes. In each case, the mailboxes tell the story of what has happened on the nearby land. The plow mailbox, for instance, is usually found in flat or rolling farm regions. It is typically constructed with a horse or ox drawn plow. Either the tractor has replaced the work animal, or agriculture has ceased entirely in these areas. In the coves of the mountains, there are logging chain mailboxes, with the links skillfully and carefully welded together in an "S" curve. Just as the plow serves as testament to the former row-cropped



**Fig. 1.** Wagon wheel used as a backdrop in a flower bed.



**Fig. 2.** Plow Mailbox along U.S. 221 in Floyd County, Va.

flatlands, the logging chain mailbox is a marker of logging, the previous man-machine-land relationships in the coves of the mountains. The “native habitat” of the milk-can mailbox is along old highways and secondary roads at the entrance to farms, with big dairy barns and silos in the background.

These sculptures are not spontaneous disposal of junk. They are monuments. The intentional sculptural relics are tangible monuments which offer unlimited access to the past. They tell stories of the way people have lived within the landscape. In each case, the artifact holding the mailbox was a vital link of survival in the previous man-machine-land relationship. Without the plow, the farmer could not have farmed. The tool was the foundation of his family's income. The plow was *the tool* through which he communicated with the soil. Similarly, the milk can represents the marketing link of the dairy farmer's living. It was *the carrier* of his production, and transported his family's efforts to the mouths of many people. Without the presence of the logging chain and something to pull it, the forester could not have logged. The walls of countless city buildings were rubbed with the chain on their way out of the woods, and the logger or his descendants are showing it off.

As a mailbox post or as yard sculpture, the symbol of former income now stands as the symbol of global communication. Mailboxes are the common frontispiece for rural American homes. Expressive story-mailboxes introduce the artisan to visitors or even to passers-by. Just by looking at his mailbox or the sculpture in his yard, we know a great deal about his history and his feelings about the environment. The resourceful expression of the Blue Ridge farmer has created a “*communication double entrendre*.” In addition to their utilitarian role of holding a mailbox, plows, milkcans and chains are now man-man communication tools of former man-nature relationships. They line the roads of the highland plateau between Roanoke, Va. and Boone, N.C.

Just as the mainstream identified the Appalachian sub-culture natives as “fatalistic,” there is a tendency for the mainstream to label the natives’ sculpture as “tacky.” The sculpture needs to be seen for the stories it tells. The beauty of these monolithic sculptures lies in their ability to communicate the man-machine-land relationship the careful observer will find in the Blue Ridge.

The first category deals with monolithic pieces of machinery as symbols of past man-machine-land relationships. The second category will deal with motion machinery as a significant part of a complete work of vernacular landscape design. This category is a little closer to the wholistic (fatalistic) Appalachian view of motion machinery’s place. The artists of these pieces use a different scale. They compose entire pieces of machinery as monuments in the environmental tapestry of working farms, rather than the artists above who used parts to tell of past relationships.

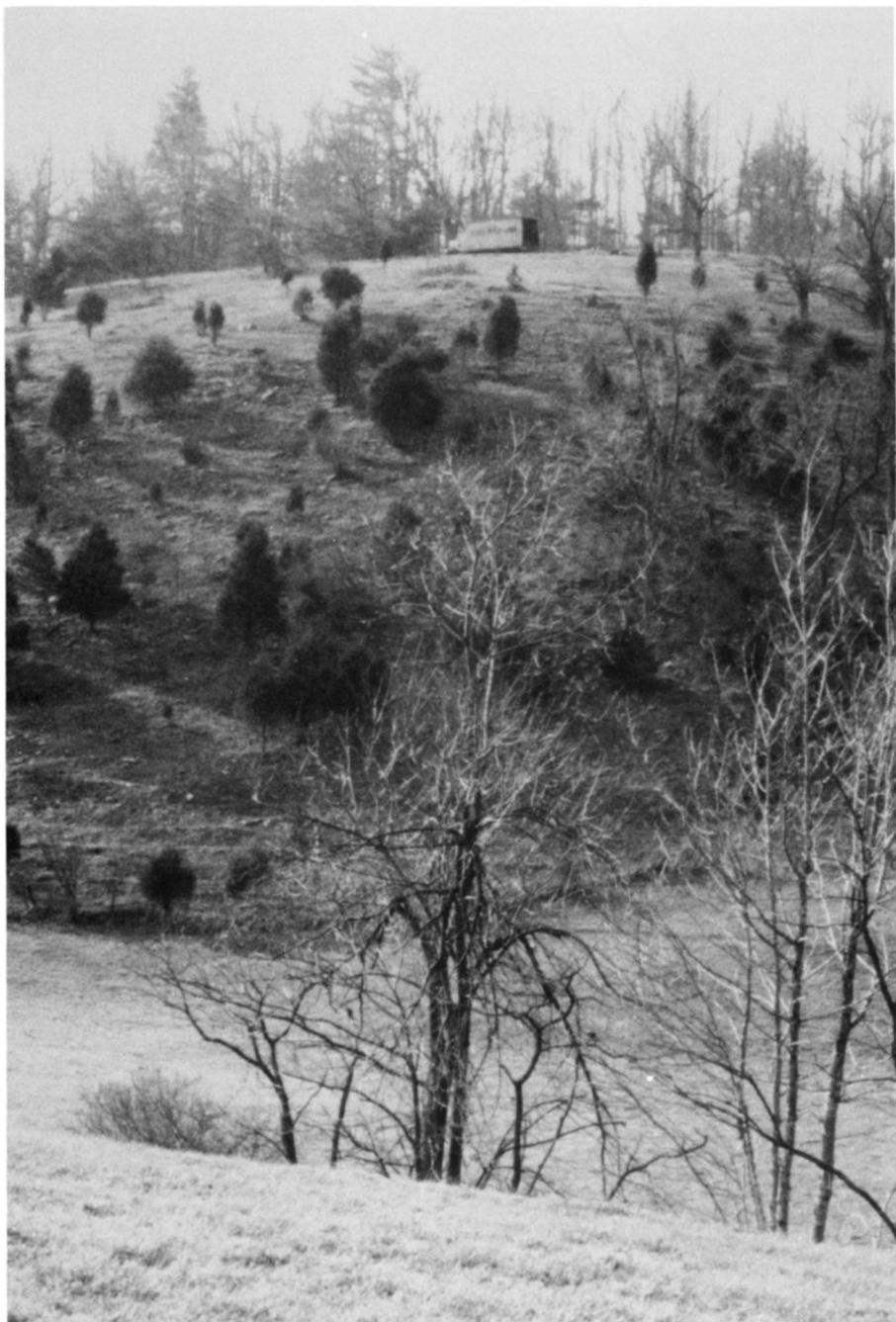
## 2. SILENT MONUMENTS ON HILLTOPS

There seems to be a scientific and mythical explanation for many of the land use patterns in the Blue Ridge cultural landscape. This dual explanation creates a harmony of reasons for peoples' actions. To the landscape observer it indicates a society comfortable in its environment. The Blue Ridge culture has developed mythical and practical patterns with the terrain. A special love for and celebration of topography is exhibited in songs and tale, and it is exhibited in environmental art. After the age of fear from Indian attack, the farmhouses and outbuildings have been typically located in the valleys or on the lower slopes. There is a rationale for this. The houses benefit from their location near springs (Miles, 1975). There are symbolic reasons for it as well. The valleys *feel* protected between the peaks, but more importantly the valleys are in the modest location. The dwelling area is surrounded on the slopes by the fields. The Blue Ridge farmer worked God's fields in the day and then walked back to Nature's protected valley at night. Property lines ran back and forth along ridge-tops, cutting the farms into viewsheds. This was a very practical way to divide land, having the house visible from the fields and vice-versa. Symbolically, it created a sense of "oneness" for each farm. The isolation created by the land use patterns fostered the Mountaineer's independent attitude. From the perspective of the early Parkway, each bowl-shaped farm must have appeared as an independent organism.

The house was in the most modest landscape position. The cemeteries were not. They were located on top of the hills. After living in the valleys and working on the slopes, the dead were honored with tenure in the monumental landscape position. They were buried on the hill-top, forever overlooking the fields and the farmhouse area. These cemeteries were dotted across the same ridges as the Parkway, and these institutions share the same views to the remaining farmhouses.

The farmer treated his farm machinery symbolically as any other working entity on the farm, just as the family members and animals. The equipment barn is typically clustered in the modest landscape position with the house and the barns, and naturally the machinery shared the same work area as the farmer on the slopes. When machinery "dies," or becomes unnecessary, it starts to accumulate on the farm. Sometimes, the dead machinery is placed in the monumental position as is the family. It is placed on the hill-tops, without any intention of ever being used again. There is a practical reason for this. On the hilltops, it is out of the way of the barnyard and the fields. But symbolically it is "laid to rest" overlooking the fields it farmed.

Mountain folklore is full of cases where landforms, trains, etc. were sometimes given names and almost always given gender. Again, this trait is seen in cultures which have a comfortable relationship with their



**Fig. 3.** Truck monument on a hill-top.

landscape. What we see on the hills, at least in symbol, is that the Blue Ridge farmer has personified his early farm machinery. This personification is likely to have come about because of the savior role it played on the early twentieth century farm. Even though many farms were too small in size and in finances and too steep in terrain for large machinery, the small scale equipment that rolled over the Blue Ridge and renewed the farmer's hope in the early 1900's earned it a place of honor in his heart and in his landscape design.

David Whisnant (1975), in his introduction to *The Spirit of the Mountains*, discusses Appalachian emotional expression and deals with folksong as an outlet for emotion.

Coming from a culture in which feelings are valued most when rendered at the highest pitch, one may be pleasantly surprised to witness such an art of indirection drawing on the voices of tradition for personal effect. Not only the songs, which speak of people's feelings mostly through action or highly conventional images, but also the day-to-day relationships of the mountain people reflect this indirection.

By applying Whisnant's observation about musical expression to sculptural expression, the idea of these symbolic silent monuments on hilltops is not so far-fetched. Machines on the hill-tops are living symbols of past man-land relationships. They are visible from all sides, reminding the visitor the way Mountain people feel about machines and nature.

In the previous category, environmental sculptors employed parts of machines to represent former relationships. In this case, the machine itself is the conquerer, enduring prior hardships and dying with enough parts to cast a silhouette on the hilltop. The silent machine, out of the way on hilltops, fulfills the dual role as reminder of the past and "a guide to the future; just as it confers a kind of immorality on the dead, it determines our actions in the years to come (Jackson, 1980)."

The sculptural uses of machinery discussed in the first two categories of this endeavor seem to have occurred intentionally. The third category deals with a kind of accident which can provide a powerful aesthetic experience. This category can be enjoyed for a new relationship which American society is just beginning to acknowledge.

### 3. AESTHETIC ACCIDENTS

The place of the machine in the landscape has always represented an American Identity. During the settling of the West, painting the machine in the landscape became a national obsession! The symbolism of trains and fresh timber cuts on the newly discovered lands became a favorite subject for American realists and impressionists. The subject showed up in the "middle ground" of primitive art and well renowned painters well into the twentieth century. Although the machine in the garden could be a horrify-

ing sight, it was a very picturesque sight and the painters took full advantage of it. "The paradoxes of this relationship to nature are sharply revealed in the 'civilizing' of the land. Progress toward America's future literally undercut its past (Novak, 1980)."

In the Blue Ridge, decaying machines are visible in the barnyards, in the fields and on the hill-tops. These same machines that were cause of the destruction in the paintings fifty years ago are now the effect of destruction. Their destruction results from a force more powerful than they — natural reclamation! We have come full circle. The melting sculptures represent a new chapter in the picturesque.

Robert Jungk (1982) explains that perhaps these ruins have not been accepted as aesthetically pleasing because unlike architectural ruins, they have not come down to us from the distant past, "...they still belong to our near present. They are not uplifting but rather ludicrous and horrifying at the same time. It must be a disconcerting experience for anybody who mistakenly thought that such technical equipment to be precise and trustworthy, and relied on its functioning properly."

Where the other categories of man-machine-land dealt with vernacular expression, this aesthetic experience is picturesque without anybody's intent. The paradoxes of this relationship are quietly revealed with nature taming technology. For example, bulldozer which has pushed down thousands of trees is not an impenetrable steel shield around a growing locust. The feeling from the discord of these accidental discoveries completes the circle of the man-machine-land relationship. This time Nature is initiating the dialogue.

No matter where their location or the intent of the artist, these silent iron and steel machines have all the right characteristics to be virtual fortresses for wildlife. They are placed away from the activities of the farm, and have nooks and crannies up off the ground for nest building. They offer shelter previously unavailable in the fields. Motors become homes for birds and mice, tires for mosses.

This is not to say in the least that these melting machines are ecologically beneficial. In fact, the opposite is true. They more than make-up for the occasional nest by poisoning the ecosystem with oils and metals. But the decaying machines are reality, and they are a vital part of the Appalachian cultural landscape.

Even in a state of silent decay, machines remain the language between us and the Garden of Appalachia. Ruins of motion machinery in the landscape celebrate a vernacular past where there are no dates or names. They are simply a symbol of the way we have communicated with the Blue Ridge.

## A PLACE FOR RUINS

The Blue Ridge Parkway has served as an agent of transition for the culture of the Blue Ridge Native. In the 1930's, the Parkway became the first

hard-top road in many of the Mountain counties (Jolley, 1969). It was the tool to open the isolated ridgetops to tourism. Fortunately, with limited access and closed to commercial vehicles, the Parkway was a slower "agent of transition" than it could have been. Its design presented the tourist a bell-jar view of the native farms. While trying to screen the "ugly" parts of the Blue Ridge while focusing on its beauty, the Parkway, owning and manicuring a very neat foreground, has cultivated vistas to the patchwork scenes of the valley farms in the "middle landscape." The picturesque mountains in the background complete this living landscape painting. The intersections with commercial routes became changed and although some adjacent landowners will claim their lives were "forever changed," the Appalachian Sub-culture was alive and well and generally held its own without too much to do with the parkway.

Now there are much faster agents of transition in the Appalachian Landscape. From the completed Interstate Highway System to satellite reception dishes, the mountain culture is becoming rapidly assimilated into the mainstream of American society. Now that the last culvert is in place, the role of the Planning, Design and Engineering office will change dramatically. The Parkway has a chance to serve as an Agent of Preservation. During the next fifty years, the Appalachian Sub-culture will be severely endangered and may become extinct. Although celebration of the cultural landscape has been a constant objective of the Parkway, with the rapid disappearance of the culture, it is imperative that the cultural landscape be used to demonstrate an active, working, living landscape.

Implied throughout this paper is a reminder to those concerned with the Blue Ridge Parkway that the many farmers' patterns and details along the road are part and parcel of the Blue Ridge Society. If the Parkway wants to keep the primal vistas of the landscape painter's "middle landscape," it needs to protect the culture of Jefferson's "middle landscape." Masters at integrating the machine with the land, and holding some of the prime farmlands in the region, the Parkway Management has potentially its greatest role about to develop. During the next fifty years, the greatest challenge for the planning and design office will be the celebration of the unique society and its relationship to the landscape.



**Fig. 4.** Parallel chrome on the grill is barely recognizable as vines reclaim this truck cab.

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Nature Celebrating Our  
Blue Ridge Parkway  
by Jacob Jackson Bondurant  
First Place  
Art Category—Grades K-3  
Bell Heth Elementary School

Untitled  
by Rebecca Johnson  
First Place  
Art Category—Grades 4-8  
Mountain View School  
Morganton, North Carolina



Time to Fertilize  
by Kay Cochran  
First Place  
Art Category—Grades 9-12  
Swain County High School  
Bryson City, North Carolina

STUDENT ART AND ESSAYS

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# Harvard of Celo

by  
*Kelly Elizabeth Draughn*  
First Place  
East Burke High School

Growing up in Burke County in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Parkway has given me many opportunities to visit its parks, stop at the overlooks, and camp nearby. I remember from my earliest childhood, crossing underneath the underpass on Buck Creek Gap on my way to Granny's house in Yancey County. As we rode along, my mother pointed out that my grandfather Willard Robinson had operated a wagon drill in the construction of the Parkway tunnels; Uncle Herman (Robinson) worked on a crew that paved the section from Buck Creek Gap to McKinney Gap.

When we went to visit my grandmother's home, we learned about the little communities that lay along our route on Highway 80, Busick, Hamrick, and at last, Celo. The road wandered along the South Toe River, past federal lands, saw mills, and cow pastures. Mt. Mitchell stood guard over the smaller mountains like the Seven Mile Ridge.

My mother described her childhood experiences in Celo, one of the communities snuggled in the Toe River Valley. She recalled her first school, an institution of some claim to fame, at least by name. The school opened in the twenties, she thinks, and housed grades from one to eight in its wooden, three-room structure. She walked to school barefoot in spring; she jumped the branch for exercise and fun at "recess".

The facilities typified the primitive, lovely wooded setting. The water fountain resided outside, bubbling from a mountain spring. Mother and her friends often brought pint jars of fresh milk to cool for lunch. The lunch was an individual affair, bags or pails, spread out on the desks or outside, as the weather allowed. Other facilities boasted two outhouses, one for boys and one for girls. "Being excused" meant a shivering trip in the cold winter climate!

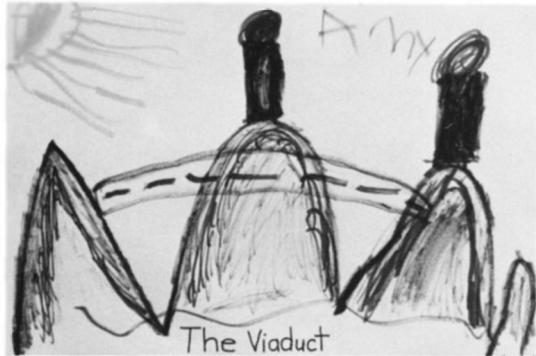
Inside each room, students warmed themselves in varying degrees, by a large pot belly stove, filled by coal. Those who sat close by always suffered from splotched legs. Those far away never had such symptoms, unfortunately; they wore chillblains! One of the teachers during my mom's school years, Miss Ray, Miss Young or Mr. Bennet, would build the fire. Deserving students would receive the honor of bringing in buckets of coal and sweeping the floor at the end of each day.

Mother's favorite time was the weekly visits of Miss Shirley and Miss Peterson, two religious workers, who came to tell Bible stories. Their forte was a flannel board which was about as close to a "show" as the mountain

children ever got.

Years passed. With progress came consolidation, and the little school closed down in 1951. Mother and her peers moved into South Toe River School, located on land that had belonged to her family. It was a fine brick building with indoor plumbing, a lunchroom, and a wonderful playground — a whole new world.

The little three-room school fell into disrepair, and, finally, oblivion — except in the hearts and memories of the mountain children, like my mother, Emma Robinson. She knows, and wants others to know that some of the mountain children near the Blue Ridge Parkway attended an educational institution of distinction — Harvard, of Celo.



The Viaduct

by Amy Koupus

Second Place

Art Category—Grades K-3

Oak Hill Elementary School

Morganton, North Carolina



Untitled

by David Lambert

Second Place

Art Category—Grades 4-8

Virginia Junior High School

Bristol, Virginia



Untitled

by Heather Pittillo

Second Place

Art Category—Grades 9-12

Cullowhee High School

Cullowhee, North Carolina

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# Legends Live On

by

*Claudia Suzette Deyton*

2nd Place

Burnsville, N.C. Mountain Heritage High School

He remembered going to school barefoot, not because shoes hurt his feet, but because his family could not afford them. He remembered firing the boiler for his daddy as he sawed the timber he cut into strips. He remembered playing hookey from school and going swimming in the river with the older boys when there was still ice along the edges of the bank. He remembered taking his first drink of moonshine in the smoke-house where his daddy kept it hid. He told his children stories of times when his older brothers had to hunt for food because there was not enough meat. He told them stories his daddy told him, of coming to the mountains from the coast, and building his family a two room log home, a luxury in those days. He never went any farther than fourth grade, and he never learned to read.

At the head of Locust Creek in South Toe River Valley, my great-grandfather raised six children, eighty banty roosters, and sixteen pure-bred coon hounds. He raised his children well: to dance when they heard good music, sell when they had a good offer, always believe in God, but a little nip would not hurt now and then, and that apple trees were what to look for when selecting a wife.

To make a living for his family, he ran a sawmill. His oldest son and nephews logged all day so my grandfather and great-grandfather could saw them the next day. They used horses to move their logs.

He worked six days a week and on the seventh day he rested. He did not take his family to church because it was too far to walk. He read to them from the Bible, not word for word because he could not read, but he knew the stories so he told them to his children and they never knew any difference. He was a big man, six foot, six inches, and weighed two hundred, fifty pounds in his prime. He learned to make moonshine from his daddy, a trade passed from father to son in those days. The revenuers never blew up his still because they never found it.

Sunday nights were always special to his children because on these nights, he played his harmonica and they danced with each other and neighboring children. They danced far into the night, and across the hills you could hear shouts of joy and the music combining to make happiness. When the neighboring children returned to their homes, there was never any danger of being killed or kidnapped. They knew their way home perfectly. Sometimes the children stayed the night. For snacks they had cold biscuits and sowbelly in them. If they wanted to campout, they went outside with two blankets.

My grandfather used to take his friends and in the middle of the night, slip out to the smoke-house and drink a little of Paw-paw's moonshine.

His children suffered, but they had many good times and many good remembrances to tell their grandchildren. He never had an electric light in his house nor an automobile. They could not afford a radio, so to hear the news he went to the general store where you bought everything from pots and pans to farm equipment.

They had no home luxuries. A room of your own was simply out of the question. If you had to go to the restroom in the night, you did not go down the hall and to the right, you went outside to the little house with the half-moon on the door. If it was cold, you held it. If you could not, you wet your bed and froze anyway. To take a bath you carried water from the creek and filled a large tub. If you wanted a hot bath, you put a fire under it. Soap was homemade from ashes. It was called lye. If there was a lice epidemic you made a paste of sulphur and water and put it on your head. If that did not get rid of them, you shaved your head, girl or boy. A stick of candy at Christmas was far too generous and on Easter you went to church.

Life in the mountains was hard. Children were expected to do many grownup things like keeping the barn clean, catching the evening meal, working with your father from daylight to dark. The children did not complain because they did not know any difference. They did not wish for things they did not have because there was no point in it. You simply had what you could afford.

Mountain people were well-adjusted. They had to learn to take the good with the bad, and if more bad than good come your way, well, that was expected.

If you move to the mountains to get away from the city's bright lights or noises, well, you have come to a wonderful place. The sun sets here bright and pure because there is nothing to hide it from us, no smog, no pollution. When it comes up in the morning, there is a feeling of new birth for all the forests and animals.

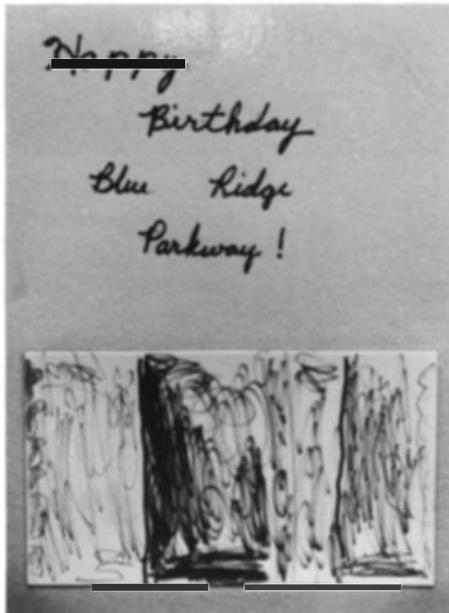
Yesterday's mountain children have grown, many of them are dead, others live to tell their children and grandchildren of life when there was no cars, no television, no electricity. Today's mountain children listen to their heritage, their mountain heritage, and learn. Someday, they will tell their children of the wonders the Appalachian Mountains have given us, and this way legends live on. This is a wonderful place, and it must be preserved for our grandchildren.

Above my grandfather's house there is the remains of an old house, an old smokehouse, and an old still. I walk through the woods on the old trails, made long before my great-grandfather came, and if I listen closely to the wind I can hear a harmonica playing and shouts of glee coming from the dancing children. If I listen closely enough, I can hear them bid goodnight to each other as they trudge home through a beautiful forest, over the hill,

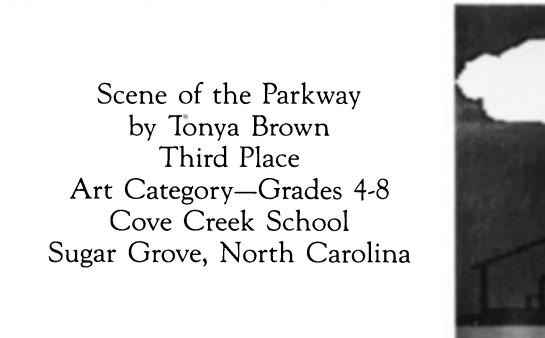
to their own log cabin by a babbling stream.

The mountain people have progressed greatly but are still the same deep within. They are hard working wonderful people. I know. I have lived here all my life.

Life here is mysterious and wild, but it is a place of beauty, freedom, love, and kindness. People here are the same, and they will never change. They will fight for what is theirs, their mountain heritage. Though the forests may be burned and the mountains leveled, the memories, the folk tales, the songs, and the music will remain in the hearts of the pure mountain-bred forever. The legends live on.



Scenic Postcard  
by Matthew Proffitt  
Third Place  
Art Category—Grades K-3  
Cove Creek School  
Sugar Grove, North Carolina



# Please...Don't Pick the Wildflowers

by

Marci Ledford

3rd Place

Marshall Elementary School Marshall, N.C.

You are looking outside the window of your car as you travel along the Blue Ridge Parkway. You will marvel at the beauty of the land around you. This is one of Mother Nature's ways of saying thank you to all the people who have contributed to the preservation of this area. Grand views, numerous wildflowers, trees, and the majestic beauty of it all, will make you realize how much you love the land. You continue along, getting more entranced by the splendor that unfolds around you.

As one drives along in early spring, one will encounter various types of vegetation. The spring temperature increase of the Blue Ridge reaches the valley floor first, then the increase moves up the mountainside.<sup>1</sup>

The first flowering plant you will see is the skunk cabbage.<sup>2</sup> It blooms as early as late January but no later than the first of March. It is found in swampy areas of the Parkway. As it grows, it generates heat. This melts the frozen ground around it, thus allowing it to grow. Since it is uncommon and does not have elaborate blooms, this first sign of spring usually goes unnoticed.

Soon after the skunk cabbage blooms, bloodroot begins its appearance from mid-March to mid-April. These plants can mainly be found at heights under 3,000 feet, but those that grow above 3,000 feet will eventually bloom in the middle of April.

Soon after the bloodroots bloom various plants such as spring beauty, serviceberry, silverbell, birdfoot, violet, crested dwarf-iris, squirrel corn, Indian paintbrush, great chickweed, princess tree, and redbud can be seen. These plants bloom from March to June. These are just a few of the more beautiful wildflowers along the Parkway seen in the spring. Many are found along mountain trails, where people very often hike. People are inclined to pick flowers, either for their beauty, or to make a collection for an arrangement.

The flower, spring beauty, will serve as an example—it is abundant at all elevations of the Parkway. Only three to four inches tall, it grows on wooded slopes. Its dainty and beautiful flowers are narrow and white with pink-striped coloring.

The silverbell is another of the beautiful wildflowers along the Blue Ridge. Their blooms are plentiful during April and May. The small white bell-shaped flowers hang from the branches of the medium-sized tree.

Of the thirty-one violets in the Blue Ridge, the birdfoot violet<sup>3</sup> is different from the others. Most violets have two dark and three light petals, but all five of those of the birdfoot vary in tints of bluish-purple. Its blooming form can be observed from March to June. It is so-named because the leaves resemble the shape of a bird's foot. It thrives under dry, open woods.

The graceful crested-dwarf-iris can be found in its blooming splendor during April and May. Though only four to six inches tall it brightens roadsides and open slopes. The flowers vary from a rich blue to light purple or white.

The Indian paintbrush receives its name for an interesting reason. The petals, the majority of which are red, are shaped similar to an Indian's feather. The bases of the petals are green, suggesting that they have been dipped in paint. It can be observed in its peak bloom during April and May.

An elegant display of the beauty often seen on the Blue Ridge Parkway, is the princess tree. Also, called the royal paulownia, it can be found along road banks and populated areas. The purple bell-shaped flowers add grace to the Parkway. The flowers appear in late April and early May.

During April and May at elevations up to 1500 feet the landscape is brightened by the redbud. The deep pink flowers will appear on the branches as well as on trunks.

As the summer comes upon us, the floral exhibition gets into full swing.<sup>4</sup> The heath family blooms in a crowded sequence during May and June. The pinxter-flower is the first to make its appearance. Also known as purple honeysuckle, it is often mistaken for honeysuckle.

Depending on elevation, the flame azalea blooms from April to July. It lines the roadsides in Rocky Knob, Craggy Gardens, and Mount Pisgah.

Probably the most popular blooming display is in June and July. At Craggy Gardens alone, with the exception of the autumn display, no one thing attracts as many visitors to the Parkway as the wonderful rhododendron.

Wildflowers in June and August attract many insects.<sup>5</sup> The joe-pye-weed with its pink-purple flower are sure targets. Atop twelve or fifteen feet high stems, it is clear to see the splendor which attracts visitors, as well as insects.

The ironweed is an impressive plant to be seen on the Parkway. Its purple flowers can be seen at their peak during August.

A flower pollinated by the hummingbird is the cardinal flower. The red flower clusters attract the hummingbird. They can be found in wet, swampy areas and at bloom from June to August.

From July to September the abundant white flowers of the Virgin's Bower, can be seen scattered along the Parkway. The feathery fruits are attractive when they appear during autumn.

Although rare south of Maryland, the closed gentian can be found along the Alum Cave Bluff Trail and alongside the Blue Ridge Parkway. The purple blooms can be seen during August and September.

The common goldenrod is fairly abundant. Blooming in August and

September the rod-like and golden spreading flower clusters bloom until first frost. It is seen at elevations of 5,000 to 6,000 feet.

The most likely candidate for being the last wildflower of the year to bloom will probably be won by the witch-hazel. The stringy, cream-yellow blossoms are seen after the leaves have fallen from the nearby deciduous trees. Sometimes they last until after the first snowfall. The last floral scent of the year is the faint tangerine smell of the witch-hazel.

The wildflowers are now in their dormant stages of life. Not totally dormant, now is the time that they work to reproduce more of their own kind. If you pick one flower, you destroy six future flowers. Think about it.

Many are tempted to pick a flower thinking just one won't hurt. One will hurt. In destroying the beauty, we are also destroying the reproductive process in which more flowers are able to bloom.

This beauty cannot last unaided. Year after year thousands of tourists pass through the Parkway and daily destroy a part of the natural surroundings. One does not realize the effect he or she has on the environment. If each traveler on the Parkway gathers flowers, litters, and builds campfires in restricted areas, we will eventually destroy the natural grace of the Blue Ridge Parkway. If we aren't able to preserve this beauty, what will we do when our grandchildren ask to see such beauty as we have described in a bedtime story about our childhood? Conservation is the key to preserving the natural beauty of the Parkway. Please, don't pick the wildflowers.

## ENDNOTES

1. Catlin, David T.—*A Naturalist's Blue Ridge Parkway*—p. 36
2. Catlin, David T.—*A Naturalist's Blue Ridge Parkway*—p. 56
3. Campbell, Carlos C., Hutsow, William F., Sharp, Aaron, J.—*Great Smoky Mountains Wildflowers (4th Edition)*—p. 14
4. Bake, William A.—*The Blue Ridge*—p. 32
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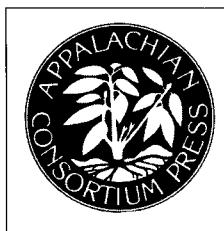
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